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NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR 46,716

Is Zero Tolerance the answer to serious crime?

You're nicker

Get with it, boys!

Books

The art of writing

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Suddenly satellites are big business

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Fierce Labour rebuttal exercise forces Tories on to the defensive

Tax bombshell fuels poll fever

Michael White Political Editor

LABOUR and the Conservatives were both claiming victory in the first big skirmish of the election campaign last night after Tory claims that a Blair government would cost the average family £1,200 a year in extra taxes met with an opposition rebuttal exercise of unprecedented brutality.

By late evening the 99-page Conservative document — 89 “major spending pledges”, according to the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, William Waldegrave — had been subjected to a detailed Labour rebuttal and a counter-rebuttal from policy analysts at Tory headquarters.

With Labour determined not to allow what Gordon Brown dubbed the “Tory lie machine” to repeat Chris Patten’s “Labour tax bombshell” coup in 1992, the effectiveness of the rival propaganda tactics will not finally be known until the election votes are counted.

But John Major’s election team at Conservative Central Office, which had totted up a £30 billion bill for implementing assorted Labour aspirations — £7 billion less than the comparable bill for Neil Kinnock’s alleged plans in 1992 — spent most of the day on the defensive after independent experts derided many of their claims.

Sweeping aside assorted quotations culled from speeches by Tony Blair and his senior colleagues — signalling costly improvements in every Whitehall department, according to the Tories — the shadow chancellor hammered home his own austere message that the “five



‘It is important we all stand by these figures and ministers make sure they use only these figures in public’
— William Waldegrave

early pledges” contained in the recent Road to the Manifesto statement were the only ones that mattered.

“We will rebut whatever is claimed about spending, one by one. The Road to the Manifesto makes it absolutely clear what we can deliver and what we can’t deliver, and it makes it absolutely clear that every spending commitment will be funded,” Mr Brown said. The rest were aspirations, pilot projects or merely ideas for consideration.

“The Conservative campaign has failed. They have tried to get a scare running, negative American-style campaigning. They have failed,” he insisted.

Well aware that a Labour tax scare will be harder to sell to swing voters after tax rises of £17 billion under John Major since 1992, Tory officials privately conceded that yesterday’s launch might not work as well “factually”.

“But it may work in persuading voters that Labour will say anything to get elected, that they say one thing in the City and another thing to the voters,” said one Tory insider. “It makes them look two-faced.” In effect it

amounts to a subliminal extension of the “demon eyes” attack on Labour.

Mr Major and his deputy, Michael Heseltine, both stressed that theme yesterday, hoping to force Mr Blair and Mr Brown to publish their own costings or deny that the 89 pledges exist.

“Either it’s a confidence trick and there’s nothing behind it, or it is going to cost a lot,” Mr Heseltine told Channel 4 News. Mr Waldegrave, whose Treasury boss, Kenneth Clarke, will present the last pre-election Budget on Tuesday, ducked detailed questions about the scale of Conservative tax rises since 1992 — and pressure to say taxes will not rise again if Mr Major wins a fifth Tory term.

Mr Clarke is expected to cut the basic rate of income tax by at least 1p to appease the Tory right, though Labour claimed last night he would have to put up VAT and other taxes to square the debt circle sooner or later. As in 1992, ministers deny it.

“We had to put up taxes after the last election largely because the tax base falls away in a recession. I don’t believe Labour would have

asked us to make the very large expenditure cuts in services that would have been necessary to maintain the original tax base at the time of a recession,” Mr Waldegrave told a Westminster press conference. The Tories remained “tax-cutters by instinct”, he argued.

Two sub-plots enlivened the row which pitted the two party election machines against each other in earnest for the first dress rehearsal of the campaign. Labour targeted Mr Waldegrave as personally untrustworthy because of his controversial role in the arms-to-Iraq affair — “his credibility has been demolished” — and played up the role of the neutral civil service in allegedly vetting, and giving credibility to, estimates placed on Labour’s programme by Tory special advisers and researchers.

With the First Division Association repeating higher officials, protesting that “a clear boundary has been crossed” in the use of civil servants for party purposes, a statement from the Cabinet Secretary, Sir Robin Butler, denounced as a “travesty” reports that he had protested to Mr Waldegrave over Tory suggestions that he had personally approved the exercise. Labour insisted they were accurate.

Mr Brown’s Treasury team also published a leaked memo from Mr Waldegrave, reminding cabinet colleagues of yesterday’s “Labour Costings Exercise”. In it, he said: “It is particularly important that we all stand by these figures and that all ministers make sure that they use only these figures in public.”

Tory “lie machine”, page 8; Leader comment, page 8; Ian Altman, page 9; Notebook, page 11



One man and his dog... Roy Hattersley, left, and an unrepentant Buster at yesterday’s photocall PHOTOGRAPH: ALEX LEWITT

Survey finds most voters would pay more for health and schools

Mark Millner

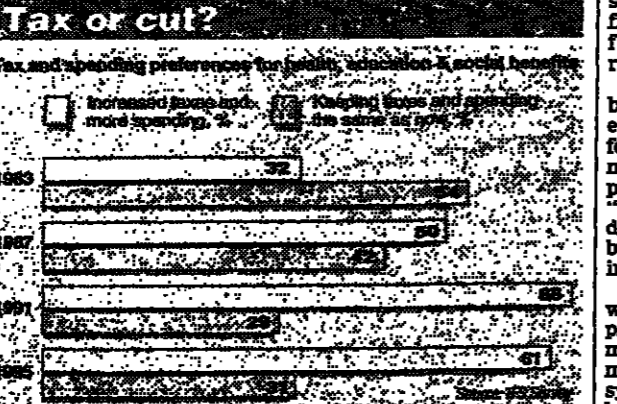
A MAJORITY of voters want higher spending on health and education, even if that means higher taxes, according to a leading survey published today.

But, in a classic illustration of voter ambiguity, most people feel that the burden of funding increased spending should fall on others.

The survey, carried out by the Institute for Fiscal Studies as part of the annual British Attitudes Survey, is unlikely to help party political strategists in the run-up to the general election.

The levels of support for more health and education spending are close to those recorded before the 1992 Conservative victory, fought and won on a commitment to cut income tax. However, they are more than double the level they stood at when the survey was first carried out in 1983.

This year’s survey set out to determine — in its own words — “whether the electorate is willing to put its money where its mouth is” on higher spending. It found that six out of 10 were prepared to pay more tax to fund more health spending, and slightly



more than half would do so to provide more money for education — though that was below the levels recorded by the previous survey, when the tax implications were not taken into account.

The fall off in support was even more marked in the case of spending on policing, where support for extra money almost halved when voters were asked if they were prepared to pay an extra penny in the pound on the basic rate of income tax or a flat 53p rise.

The survey concludes that although people are less likely to advocate large increases in public expenditure when the personal tax conse-

quences are spelled out to them in detail, a comfortable majority none-the-less supports increases in spending on at least one or more core areas of health, education and universal welfare benefits.

Paradoxically, it also notes that there is a general feeling that the burden of extra taxation should fall on those with high incomes, but only 3 per cent of those questioned included themselves in this category. “It is other people’s taxes that most people feel should go up.”

On social security benefits, the survey found that the state pension and benefits for disabled people had most support, with over half of those

surveyed making them their first or second priority. Benefits for single parents received least support.

Though more people now buy private health care and education, the survey found few signs that this was undermining support for public provision in these areas.

“This may happen to a small degree in the case of the NHS, but there is no evidence for it in the case of education.

Queen’s goose vs Hattersley, R.

John Ezard

BY old-fashioned standards at least, you knew the defendant was in dire trouble as soon as you saw how his name appeared on the magistrates’ court list yesterday.

Everyone else on the alphabetical case list — from Avolio through Hamidoc to Zaplatc — had their first names given. But this villain was listed only as Hattersley, R.

The Victorian essayist and poet Matthew Arnold famously wrote that a civil-

isation can be judged by the way it speaks of its citizens in court. Arnold was enraged by a court report that said of a poor woman charged with infanticide: “Wragg is in custody.”

By this yardstick, the Right Honourable Roy Sydney Hattersley, Privy Counsellor, was treated with unique dual barbarity at Bow Street magistrates’ court yesterday when he faced a charge of allowing his dog, Buster, to worry one of the Queen’s geese in St James’s Park.

Hattersley, like Wragg, was shorn of both his Christian names and his courtesy title. But this touch of Victorian severity ended as soon as the case opened. Ministers were showered on the former shadow home secretary, indicating that the brevity of the list may merely have been a ploy to put journalists off the scent.

Hattersley was not in custody. Hattersley was not even in court, though he had appeared for an open-air media photocall with Buster earlier. The magistrates, Richard Bartell, accepted his guilty plea by post.

The prosecuting solicitor, Richard Heatley, said that Turn to page 2, column 3

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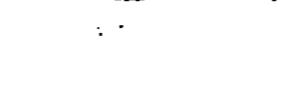
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The damage to the Channel Tunnel was much more severe than first admitted and services may take months to be fully restored.

World News
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Finance
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2 NEWS

Sketch

The cutest thing you ever heard



Simon Hoggart

ONCE a year the House holds a touching ceremony, the presentation of private members' bills. The 20 MPs who have been lucky in the ballot line up behind the Speaker's chair, each clutching their bills, crisply printed and neatly folded, ready to hand to the clerks. It's a little like World Peace Day assembly at a primary school. As their homework, all the children have been asked to write what they would do to make the world a better, happier place. Little Jimmy Frey (Lab, Glasgow Frowan) wants to ban knives "because they are nasty horrid things, and they hurt people" (not the precise words of the bill, but its general intention). Being first in line, Jimmy has the most chance of seeing his bill become law, which means extra house points and a star on his reading folder. Nigel Evans (C, Ribblesdale) brought along the Contamination of Alcohol (Young Persons) Bill. "I think alcohol tastes yucky, and when my sister came home from the disco Dad said that if she ever came back in that state again, she wasn't too old to have the strap taken to her, so I think they ought to ban it." Audrey Wicks (Lab, Preston) had spent all weekend working with her parents on the Cold Weather Payments (Wind Chill Factor) Bill. "Lots of old people get really, really cold in winter, especially if it's windy, so I think they ought to get more money for clothes and things." There used to be a television programme in which small children were interviewed along similar lines. Whenever they said something particularly wise, the interviewer would turn round to the camera and give a nauseating, "Isn't that the cutest thing you ever heard?" sort of smile, before saying, "Well,

Ray, what would you do to make people happier?" Ray Whitney (C, Wycombe) would happily and say: "Well, I think policemen ought to be healthy and safe, because they look after us, and we shouldn't be frightened of them and we tell them if a strange man wants us to get into his car, so I've done the Police (Health and Safety) Bill." The studio audience goes "Aaaaah...". Some of the private members' bills have less simple and straightforward aims. Nigel Waterson (C, Eastbourne) wants to outlaw conspiracy to commit offences outside the United Kingdom, which could involve prosecuting millions of crimes worldwide every year. John Marshall (C, Epsom) wants to provide for the safety of all United Nations personnel — who could disagree, except perhaps a few Hutu militiamen? Tommy Graham (Renfrew W) was clutching the Local Government (Gaelic Names) (Scotland) Bill, which would allow places in Scotland to take Gaelic names. If Ireland is anything to go by, Perth would become Fearghaidid, Ayr would be Blamannagh, and Edinburgh would acquire the longest place name in Europe outside Wales. Mr Graham himself would have to be renamed Tomas O'Ghrageabhammleagh. (Few, if any, of these bills will become law.) The two main political events of the day were the Government's attempt to get a civil service imprimatur for its own partisan attack on Labour's spending plans, and its wish to quash debate on the European single currency. This wheeze was defeated at an acrimonious select committee meeting yesterday morning. Both these plots were disgraceful, even by the standards of this administration, which means they were no surprise. One of the unspoken rules of the Commons is that really contentious issues must be kept from debate in the House, which is why MPs were leaving furiously up and down making points of order about both. Better to them that the Government could make a statement, but had shown no sign of doing so, which is where the matter rested.

First night

Warmongers to whoremongers

Andrew Clements Die Soldaten English National Opera

IT has taken 30 years for Bernd Alois Zimmermann's only opera to make it on to the stage in London. At least three British companies, including Covent Garden, have contemplated productions over the last 10 years, only to get cold feet when they saw the balance sheet. With an orchestra of more than 100, a large cast, three film screens and three acting areas, it is not a work to take lightly. But English National Opera has boldly gone where no one else has dared: Die Soldaten opened at the London Coliseum on Tuesday, directed by David Freeman and conducted by Elgar Howarth. In logistical terms the evening is a triumph: simply presenting the piece as coherently and musically precisely as ENO has managed is a huge achievement. Based on Jakob Lenz's 18th-century play, Die Soldaten tells the story of a hapless teenager, Marie, who thinks she can become upwardly mobile by marrying an officer in the local army garrison. To the soldiers, though, she is just a bit on the side: she is raped and ruined, and ends the opera as a street prostitute. If the story is relatively simple, Zimmermann's treatment is anything but. Writing an opera for an avant garde composer in the early 1960s was a dangerous business — most of his contemporaries dismissed the medium as old hat — and Zimmermann went out of his way to show that he

could make the work conform to current ideas of complexity. Hence the use of musical and dramatic multiplicity, of scenes happening simultaneously and collages of different styles — the kind of thing that is taken for granted nowadays in film and pop but which was new at that time. The message of the piece is a sincere one, if slightly muddled and indulgent in its execution: when you train soldiers to act aggressively they will transfer that behaviour to their private lives, and it is society that bears the consequences. Freeman's production runs that point home by using much more film footage than even Zimmermann prescribed, and by providing the action with a constant backdrop of squaddies marching and drilling for battle. But he makes sure that the narrative thread is never obscured. And in the pit Howarth presents Zimmermann's teeming score as lucidly as one could ever hope, for all its atavistic outbursts. But the music also contains many passages of chamber-like intimacy, in which what characterisation there is of the protagonists is allowed to emerge. Most of the characters are little more than ciphers. Only Marie, sung here by Lisa Saffer with astonishing accuracy in some stratospheric soprano writing, gets fleshed out in any detail. Die Soldaten may not be a masterpiece, but it is more than a period piece. Other composers took up Zimmermann's ideas and did them better, but to hear his first attempt is fascinating. This review appeared in some editions yesterday.

Second candidate quits

Rebecca Smithers Political Correspondent A SECOND parliamentary candidate in the forthcoming Wirral South by-election has unexpectedly quit. The resignation of the Liberal Democrat candidate Phil Gilchrist "for family reasons" comes just 10 days after Labour's choice, Dr Ian Wingfield, stepped down from allegations of domestic violence.

It means that of the main parties only the Conservatives have a candidate in place, prompting senior Labour sources to admit that the Tories could wrong-foot their rivals by naming an early date. Tory sources said last night the contest was still unlikely to be held before the new year. The Wirral South by-election has been triggered by the death last month of Tory MP Barry Porter.



James Spader and Deborah Unger in a scene from David Cronenberg's Crash, described by Westminster councillors as "sexually degrading" and "near necrophilia"

Sado-masochist film Crash banned

Owen Bowcott

CRASH, the controversial movie about sado-masochists being aroused by car accidents, was yesterday banned from the cinemas of London's West End, at least temporarily. The group of Westminster councillors who spent the morning in a private studio in Soho condemned David Cronenberg's film as "sexually degrading" and "near necrophilia". Licensing sub-committee chairman John Bull — whose name, at least, implies British tradition personified — bemoaned the fact that they no longer make films "like the Wizard of Oz". Even before the British Board of Film Classification passes judgment on Crash, the members of the sub-committee banned it temporarily, demanding specific cuts before its release. Westminster's "interim" prohibition was imposed despite an open letter signed by 50 leading film-makers urging

Other films subject to bans and censorship include:

Oliver Stone's Natural Born Killers: two young killers on a murder rampage through America. Granted an 18 certificate by the BBFC, it was blamed for copycat killings in France and America. Video release was suspended in May by its distributors.

Reservoir Dogs: torture scene showed a man cutting off his victim's ear. Banned on

video in the UK until June 1995.

Visions of Ecstasy: 20-minute film on the religious and erotic experience of St Teresa of Avila was banned by the British Board of Film Censors in 1989. Included a scene in which St Teresa erotically embraces the body of Christ on the cross.

The Last Temptation of Christ opened in London in September 1988. Banned by two local authorities after

churchgoers said it was indecent and blasphemous.

Monty Python's Life of Brian banned by Glasgow council's licensing committee in 1980 because of feared insult to religious sensibilities.

Stanley Kubrick ordered Warner Brothers to remove his film, A Clockwork Orange, from distribution in the UK in 1973 after complaints that the box-office hit had inspired a plague of teenage violence.

screening, he said: "It's a good film. It's exceedingly well made, you can't take that away. If you are asking me personally whether I enjoyed the film, I can be quite honest. I could live without it. I don't like all these sex scenes and car crashes. It's not me, but then you have to remember I am a senior citizen." While the BBFC is still considering what type of certificate to award, or whether it should have one, Crash, based on a novel by J G Ballard, has already been shown in Canada, France, Italy, Germany, Portugal, and Scandinavia. In most of those countries it has been rated for 16 or 18 years and over. Among film-makers signing the protest letter yesterday in support of the film were Mike Leigh, Ken Loach, Peter Greenaway, Bernardo Bertolucci, Jeremy Isaacs, Nicolas Roeg and Michael Fallin. The co-executive director of Crash, Chris Aulry, said he was optimistic that the coun-

cillors' decision would leave the final word to the BBFC. "I think the key word here is 'interim'." "All we really want is that our work of art, which is how we think of this film from the bottom of our hearts, gets the opportunity to be seen in an uncut form by the British public." Michael Winner, another director who signed the letter, said: "This is coming up to election time. You can look heroic if you start saying 'I will get rid of crime by banning films'." "Come elections, politicians get more censorious in the battle to be holier than the next man. We are really the most overcensored country in the free world." According to Screen International magazine, the moral panic over Crash was spreading. Politicians in Naples have begun calling for the film to be banned. Head-on collision, page 9

Baywatch star's marriage sinks

Pam Anderson and Motley Crue drummer to split after 21 months

Christopher Freed in Los Angeles

PAMELA Anderson, the statuesque sex symbol in the popular television series Baywatch, is to divorce her husband Tommy Lee after only 21 months of marriage. The volatile temper of Mr Lee, drummer with the rock group Motley Crue, is widely blamed for their marital problems. A lavish lifestyle and heavy legal bills are reported to have contributed to recent disputes about money. According to divorce papers filed in Los Angeles, the couple cited "irreconcilable differences", and Ms Anderson will seek custody of their son Brandon, aged five months. In a recent interview Ms Anderson said: "People assume that Tommy is a loud-mouthed jerk. But he's really the kindest, gentlest, most loving man I've ever met. But then, people see my blonde hair and red swimsuit and assume 'I'm a bimbo'." This estimation of Mr Lee — formerly married to the Dynasty television actress Heather Locklear — has apparently been revised.



Tommy Lee and a pregnant Pamela Anderson in January

Mr Lee and the Canadian-born actress, aged 28, were married on a beach in Mexico. They then embarked on an instant rearing programme that surprised some of their tearaway friends in Hollywood. Brandon, born in June, was dressed all in

black, including his nappies, and was photographed wearing sunglasses. Goggle-eyed reporters who asked if Ms Anderson was breast-feeding the baby were answered frankly: "Everyone knows I have breast implants. But they work."

The much tattooed Mr Lee (his right arm is covered from wrist to shoulder and the word "mayhem" is inscribed in Gothic letters on his stomach) decided Brandon should also be inked. The idea was abandoned when it was explained that the design would become unrecognisable as the child grew. The couple posed for photographs wearing black leather, with baby's dummies in their mouths, while Brandon sported an estropendo-size cigar. Ms Anderson, who has barbed wire tattooed around her arm to mark her appearance in the action film Barb Wire, explained that they were getting Brandon used to the ways of show business. He joined her on the Baywatch beach when filming began again in August. Bringing up baby did not seem to stiffen the couple's party-going. Last month a freelance photographer broke his pelvis during a scuffle with Mr Lee outside the Hollywood nightclub where the actor River Phoenix died from a drug overdose in 1993, aged 23. The photographer is suing Mr Lee for assault. The couple also have a \$10 million invasion-of-privacy suit against Penthouse publisher Bob Guccione, who obtained a videotape they had made of themselves having sex. A judge in August denied their attempt to bar Penthouse from publishing some of the videotaped images. Women, G2 page 4

Court collars Hattersley over dog

continued from page 1 at 8.30am on April 8 a policeman patrolling the park came across a greylag goose "very badly injured, indeed close to death. Subsequent investigation revealed the injuries were caused by a small brown dog in the charge of Mr Hattersley." In a written statement to the court, the former Labour deputy leader said he had not meant to let his dog off the leash but it broke away from him while he was clearing up his mess. "I thought it was chasing a squirrel," he said. The Privy Counsellor regretted his dog's action and would ensure it did not happen again. Hattersley, who has no previous convictions, was fined £50, plus £25 for failing to keep Buster on a



lead, and ordered to pay £30 costs. The offences carried a total maximum fine of £400. At the photocall Buster lunged towards a flock of birds. "He does like pigeons," said his owner. "On yes, he's very fond of them."

Police shoot dead knifeman holding store boss hostage

Duncan Campbell Crime Correspondent

AMAN holding a supermarket manager hostage with a knife was shot dead by a police marksman yesterday after ignoring a warning to release his captive. He had reportedly been involved earlier in a domestic dispute nearby. The 40-year-old man had gone into a Co-op store in Ward End, Birmingham at about 4.30pm. West Midlands police said he was carrying a knife and handcuffs. He attacked three staff members, then handcuffed the manager, a man in his twenties, holding a knife to his back. Armed police called to the scene opened fire after the man ignored their warning.

Superintendent Pat Wing, leading the inquiry into the shooting, said last night the police officer who had shot the man was "extremely traumatised". Witnesses said the dead man was known locally as a mental patient. Tahir Aslam, aged 26, said he saw neighbour David Howells in the street shouting and making threats to his elderly parents. The supermarket manager, who was stabbed, was taken to Birmingham Heartlands Hospital but was not thought to be seriously injured. Local estate agent Simon Palmer said the man was shot after holding the manager at knifepoint in the back of the store. "I believe the store was cleared. It was rather quick, the whole thing only lasted 20 minutes."

DISCOVER WHY BEN ELTON WOULD RATHER SITCOM THAN STANDUP Alison Graham puts Ben Elton under the spotlight about his transition from stand up comedian to sitcom writer. Only in this week's Radio Times. On sale now. RadioTimes IT'S NOT WHAT YOU EXPECT.

كسوة من الالامل

Day of charges and counter-charges as Blair's spin doctors and 'rebuttal unit' pounce on Conservative tax claims

How media massaged the message



Gordon Brown: foresaw 'tired old campaign'

Michael White Political Editor

WHEN Tony Blair's young press aide, Tim Allen, arrived at Labour's media centre on London's Millbank yesterday, clutching a pile of Evening Standards to hand to the press, it was already a day to remember in the adrenalin-charged battle between spin doctors.

What was the Telegraph's offence? To lead yesterday's edition not on the Channel tunnel disaster but on a story warning that "Labour will cost families £1,200". It was the fruit of analysis cooked up by ministers and party officials to repeat Chris Patten's celebrated "double whammy" campaign, launched in January 1992.

What was different this time was the brutal speed of Labour's response, co-ordinated by Mr Mandelson and Gordon Brown's teams, using the banks of computers and young staff in the party's "rebuttal unit".

It began on Tuesday evening before the Telegraph's first edition was even printed. Sharp-eyed political apparatchiks had noticed a half-hearted version of the Telegraph's story tucked away on the business pages of its Sunday sister paper. Labour told reporters that the "Tory lie machine" was poised to spend 26.5 million on an advertising campaign over tax.

Mr Brown slipped a sentence into his City speech on Tuesday night predicting a "tired old campaign" over tax that would ignore his austere pledges to curb spending.

What gave the Tory campaign momentum, and upstaged Mr Brown's City speech, was that Tory headquarters had managed to intercept BBC's Newsnight in the package. Labour's Brian Wilson, from the Millbank unit, was put up to denounce it as "a pack of lies".

But Radio 4's Today programme led both its key 7am and 8am bulletins with the row, before pitting Mr Waldegrave in an 8.10 slanging match with his Labour opposite number, Alastair Darling. Mr Darling reminded listeners that Mr Waldegrave was tainted by the arms-to-Iraq imbroglio — a low blow, but legitimate. But Labour was still struggling to catch up.

Peter Mandelson: rapid, brutal response

The table below shows the most important Tory claims about Labour's tax plans

Table with 5 columns: Tory claims about Labour tax plans, Tory costing £m, Labour rebuttals, Labour costing, and Guardian analysis. It lists various claims such as 'Increase overseas aid', 'Reverse cuts in World Service', 'Regional development agencies', etc., with corresponding costs and rebuttals.

4 BRITAIN

Channel train blaze

Eurotunnel set to restart services

Unions and passenger groups condemn decision to resume freight service only two days after fire and before safety inquiry

Luka Harding, Seumas Milne and Alex Duval Smith in Paris

EUROTUNNEL was on collision course with unions and passenger groups last night as a partial freight service was due to begin only two days after the devastating blaze.

Eurotunnel operations director Alain Bertrand, speaking shortly after emergency talks in Calais with safety experts, said there would be a phased reintroduction of services, with hopes now high of passenger services back on track "by the end of the week".

As the Channel Tunnel Safety Authority was still continuing special talks to assess security requirements in the wake of the fire, Mr Bertrand went on French radio to announce a breakthrough.

Eurotunnel plans to resume in several phases and as quickly as possible, starting in a few hours with freight trains, he said. "I hope passenger trains and shuttle trains with private cars and passengers might start rolling again by the end of the week."

Mr Bertrand did not reveal details of Eurotunnel's talks with the 10-strong Safety Authority which bears ultimate responsibility for tunnel standards and which alone can decide whether or not normal services can resume.

Eurotunnel, which is losing £1 million a day in revenues while the tunnel remains shut, wants to restart Eurostar train services as soon as possible in an attempt to restore its damaged credibility and draw a line under the most damaging PR fiasco the company has faced since the tunnel opened two years ago.

But the move was condemned by the leader of Britain's firefighters yesterday who said the Channel Tunnel should remain closed until there has been a comprehensive tightening of safety systems, including the full enclosure of freight wagons and the separation of passengers from their cars.

Ken Cameron, general secretary of the Fire Brigades Union, called for an immediate public inquiry. He added: "Until such an inquiry can guarantee that safety is adequate, no one should go through the tunnel."

He accused the Channel Tunnel Safety Authority of "complacency" and said profits had been put before safety. French unions yesterday claimed the burning freight train stopped in the tunnel because a safety alarm disabled the engine.

A spokesman for the CGT union said: "The instructions from management are to continue as fast as possible to the exit."

"In the case of Monday's train, the driver intended to divert to the safety tunnel but an alarm cut in which brought the train to a halt," Colin Brown, deputy research director of the Consumers' Association, said Eurotunnel's operating licence should be withdrawn following the fiasco.

"We should not have to rely on people lying on the floors with serviettes soaked in Coca-Cola in order to survive a train fire," he said.

No decision has been taken on when car-carrying services will restart. Le Shuttle retail director, Bruce McKendrick, said last night.

Eurotunnel yesterday admitted damage from Monday's blaze had been far worse than originally thought.

With at least 600 metres of the tunnel damaged, engineers are reported to expect repairs to take "months rather than weeks". Some of the rolling stock has fused with the metal track.

The undamaged half of the freight train has been pulled out of the tunnel at Calais, but the burned-out section remains at the scene of the fire.

Mr Bertrand said the investigation into the blaze would examine reports the freight train was already on fire when it entered the tunnel.

"It may be there were the beginnings of a fire early on which our fire alarms did not detect," he conceded.



The front half of the Le Shuttle train caught in Monday's blaze emerges from the tunnel at Calais yesterday, covered in soot and ash. PHOTOGRAPH PASCAL HOSSAIGOU.

Tunnel blaze driver leaves hospital to find his job gone

HE had braved scorching heat, terrifying blackness, and choking fumes, writes Luka Harding. But far from being hailed as a hero, lorry driver Wilson Mahwhiney (below), who was caught up in the Channel Tunnel blaze, was told yesterday: "You're fired".

Mr Mahwhiney, aged 31, learned he was jobless when he rang his firm to say he had been released from hospital in France.

"It's not fair, but what in life is fair?", he said. Mr Mahwhiney was treated in Boulogne hospital after inhaling toxic fumes when he was trapped in a smoke-filled compartment on Le Shuttle.

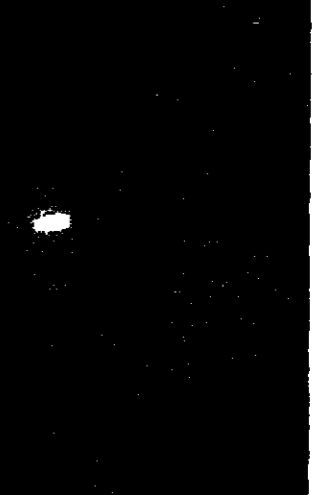
"I thought I was definitely going to die. I just thought 'Oh God, this is it,'" he said.

His cargo of catalogues went up in flames. He said that he rang his employer at the Northern Ireland firm of T J Hood to let him know he was safe but that the lorry had been badly damaged.

"I asked him where that left me. He replied: 'Unfortunately, redundant'."

"I lost all my possessions in that lorry, not only my passport, driving licence and money but all my clothes as well."

Derek Hume, his employer, said he was only "temporarily redundant". He was hoping to hire a replacement could be bought.



Insurance relieves financial gloom

Luka Harding

AS Eurotunnel executives contemplated the scale of the damage yesterday, they could be forgiven for thinking that, in the words of the song, Things Can Only Get Better.

The firm was faced with an \$8 billion overdraft, even before a lorry on its freight shuttle burst into flames.

Yesterday, some insurance experts put the final bill for Monday night's fire at £200 million, although others dismiss that as "a bit steep".

What is not in doubt is that Eurotunnel is losing a lot every day the tunnel remains closed. While Le Shuttle, Eurostar and freight services

remain suspended, it forfeits £1 million a day in revenue. Its share of the Christmas market is also likely to be reduced as the failure of the refinancing package.

Although Eurotunnel's credibility with passengers has undoubtedly taken a beating, the banks who effectively own it have no intention of calling in their debts, analysts say, and the firm's long-term future appears assured.

Before the fire the service was buoyant: last month, more than 241,000 tourist vehicles, nearly 7,700 coaches and more than 80,000 lorries used its shuttle trains. It also carried more than 230,000 tonnes of freight. In the first nine months of 1996, Eurotunnel's turnover was nearly

£363 million, and a full year figure of £450 million had been expected.

The firm had also gradually been increasing its share of cross-Channel traffic, with 7.5 million passengers so far this year, compared with 3.5 million in the same period last year. Now, though, the ferry companies are striking back.

Yesterday Stena Sealink signalled it was "actively considering" increasing its 25 round trips a day between Dover and Calais, while P&O has postponed the refurbishment of one of its freight ships to meet extra demand.

Contractual details between Eurotunnel and Eurostar, the Channel Tunnel train company, are confidential. However, it is understood Euro-

tunnel will compensate Eurostar for periods when the tunnel is unavailable for use.

Eurostar, which runs 44 trains a day between London's Waterloo station and Paris and Brussels, can expect to carry between 10,000 and 12,000 passengers a day, although its variety of ticket prices makes estimates of its daily revenue difficult. While the tunnel remains closed, Eurostar has been chartering two aircraft and offering a full refund service.

But every cloud has a silver lining. "If the system is closed you don't have to spend money on things like electricity," Mr McVicar pointed out. It may not make much difference when you owe £9 billion, but it is a start.

£1bn youth justice system 'is failing all concerned'

Alan Travis Home Affairs Editor

MORE than £1 billion a year is being spent on an inefficient juvenile justice system which is less effective than a decade ago, according to an Audit Commission report published today.

That damning indictment, in the report, Misspent Youth, says fewer teenagers were actually convicted in the courts than in the mid-1980s.

Its documentation of the failure of the way the criminal justice system deals with 1,300,000 teenage offenders each year is expected to have a significant impact on the political debate on youth crime.

It also warns that urgent action is needed to avert a demographic "crime bomb" as the population begins to bulge in the 18 to 20-year-old age group — now the peak age of offending for young men.

"The present arrangements are failing young people — who are not being guided away from offending to constructive activities. They are also falling victims," it says.

Commission controller Andrew Foster said: "The whole youth courts process needs a systematic overhaul to break the cycle of anti-social behaviour that has become the day to day reality for so many young people."

The report says 60 per cent of young criminals are cautioned by police, but few have to do anything that questions their behaviour. It is particularly critical of youth courts,

which deal with two out of five juvenile criminals in England and Wales. It found it can take 70 to 170 days for an offender to be arrested and sentenced by one of these courts, with an average of four appearances needed.

The study found that half of those prosecuted in youth courts are discharged or have their cases dismissed or discontinued. At 10 out of 12 sites visited, little or no work was being done with young offenders rather than re-offending.

The report says if about 20 per cent of juveniles — those accused of less serious offences — were sent to programmes such as Northamptonshire's "Caution plus" rather than to courts, then about £40 million a year would be released for such schemes addressing their criminal behaviour.

But the independent survey, based on a survey of 600 criminals sentenced by the youth courts and interviews with 100 more on supervision orders, says that a lot more needs to be done to prevent young people offending in the first place.

It advocates action to tackle root causes like poor parenting, rising school exclusions, lack of pre-school education in high crime areas, deprivation, unemployment and lack of training.

Report recommends alternative schemes 'to address juvenile offending behaviour directly'

Alan Travis

THE Audit Commission says money spent sending second or third time young offenders through a lengthy, ineffective youth court system could be better used on schemes to "address their offending behaviour directly".

Among schemes it says do work are: Caution plus: Used by Northamptonshire diversion unit. Offender is cautioned and agrees to pay compensation to victim whom he or she may meet. Team produces "action plan" to stop further offending. Average cost per

case is £260 — a quarter that of going through the youth court. Police decided whether to caution or prosecute.

The unit, staffed by police, teachers, probation, social services and youth justice workers, dealt with 656 young people in 1994/95. Only 35 per cent re-offend after 18 months.

Halt programme: Seventy schemes in the Netherlands, where under-16s can be referred by police if they admit guilt and have not been on it more than twice. Compensation and shaming important elements. For example, young people cleaning up graffiti wear distinctive uniforms. Halt worker contacts offender

and parents and then the victim. Arranges direct reparation and work relevant to the offence — if possible, for the victim — with payment of damages and/or extra education. Claims a 40 per cent re-offending rate compared with 80 per cent of those prosecuted.

New Zealand family group conferences: Introduced in 1999 and based on Maori methods of conflict resolution as an alternative to going to court. Aims to "empower" families to make decisions about their children and exercise authority over them. Also mediates between victim and offender. A professional worker arranges a meeting of the juvenile, their extended family and victim at a neutral venue to agree reparation and action to prevent repetition. Fifty per cent of victims say they are satisfied with outcome.

Police 'must earn Asian trust' in riot city

Peter Hetherington

A FAILURE by police to operate with the consent of the Asian community in Bradford was highlighted yesterday as a principal reason leading to rioting almost 18 months ago, pictured above.

But it was the unacceptable behaviour of a small minority of youths, "ignorant" of the means of acceptable protest, that produced a heavy police response, according to an inquiry into the three day disturbances. The inquiry was commissioned by the Bradford Congress, representing the local authority, police, unions, and business.

The inquiry report paints a depressing picture of a failure by various agencies to learn the lessons of Lord Scarman's damning report into the causes of the Brixton riots in the early 1980s.

It was "superficial and diversionary" to suggest that the riots occurred because the police were racist, but the report said: "We accept that in too many individual cases too many people experienced racism."

The riots, in the Manningham district of the city, left a trail of burned-out cars, shattered windows and looted shops.

Damage was estimated at £1 million. The violence, which took local councillors and community groups by surprise, arose out of grievances that surfaced over the allegedly heavy-handed arrest of two youths.

But attempts yesterday at reaching a consensus over the causes, and possible solutions, were undermined when one member of the commission appointed by the congress to produce the report, trade unionist Mohammed Tag, refused to sign it.

The other two members were Sheila Allen, a sociologist from the London School of Economics, and John Barratt, a solicitor and Bradford's former deputy town clerk. "He has not said why he would not sign it, and I do

not know what his reasons are," said Mr Barratt.

The report identifies ethnic conflict, misunderstandings, lack of employment opportunities and perceptions of racial divisions as the points raised by 200 people interviewed by the commission.

Throughout the report, the team makes clear the feeling that only a small number of youths were responsible for the rioting.

"We reject as superficial the suggestion that the disorders occurred because Asian parents had lost control of a generation," it said. Police, the report acknowledged, had taken positive steps in the area, although it pointed to a failure to under-

stand and relate to cultural groupings other than the white culture and in particular the local Kashmiri community.

The authors said that, while their report was not directly concerned with economic regeneration, steps to improve job prospects in the area were crucial for all sections of the Bradford community.

"A city divided into a traditional white economy and a separate Asian economy, with African Caribbeans struggling to find a place, is not capable of realising its potential."

The Bradford Commission report; HMSO; price £30.



صبراً من الامل



Snow in the Pentland Hills near Edinburgh yesterday. Although normality was returning in most areas after Tuesday's blizzards, thousands of homes in North and central Wales were still without electricity. The supplier, Manweb, said it was working flat out to reconnect supplies but Plaid Cymru MP Eilyn Llwyd said: 'We got the same excuses year after year'

Punch editor gets KO

Andrew Culf
Media Correspondent

THE man who helped to exhume the corpse of Punch was yesterday consigned to the magazine's editorial graveyard. Peter McKay received the knock-out punch yesterday afternoon after he refused to drop his new weekly column in the Daily Mail. He was appointed editor nearly nine months ago and had presided over the £3 million rebirth of the magazine after its 14-year absence from newsstands and dentists' waiting rooms. He was the 14th editor in its 155-year history. Last night Stewart Stevens, chairman of Mohamed al Fayed's Liberty Publishing, said the action followed "contractual differences" that could not be resolved. Mr McKay, aged 54, has enjoyed a colourful Fleet Street career as a columnist on the Evening Standard and victim of the Private Eye sobriquets "Peter McLie" and "the world's worst". His billing in the Daily Mail this week — "Introducing a brilliant new columnist" — precipitated his downfall at Punch. It is understood his contract, worth an estimated £175,000, included a clause requiring him not to write for other publications during the first year. Mr McKay — schooled in the old journalistic tradition of long lunches and generous expenses — was not available for comment. He is the second casualty since the relaunch. After just six issues, another executive, Mike Molloy, former editor of the Daily Mirror, parted company with the magazine. Punch relaunched in September with a 1 million copy print run. Sales have settled at around 50,000 and sources at Liberty admit it will be a long haul, although Mr al Fayed has deep pockets. When United, the former owners, closed the magazine in 1992 sales had dropped to near 100,000. Mr Stevens, former editor of the Mail on Sunday and Evening Standard, will be acting editor of Punch until a replacement is found. He is the second casualty since the relaunch. After just six issues, another executive, Mike Molloy, former editor of the Daily Mirror, parted company with the magazine. Punch relaunched in September with a 1 million copy print run. Sales have settled at around 50,000 and sources at Liberty admit it will be a long haul, although Mr al Fayed has deep pockets. When United, the former owners, closed the magazine in 1992 sales had dropped to near 100,000. Mr Stevens, former editor of the Mail on Sunday and Evening Standard, will be acting editor of Punch until a replacement is found.

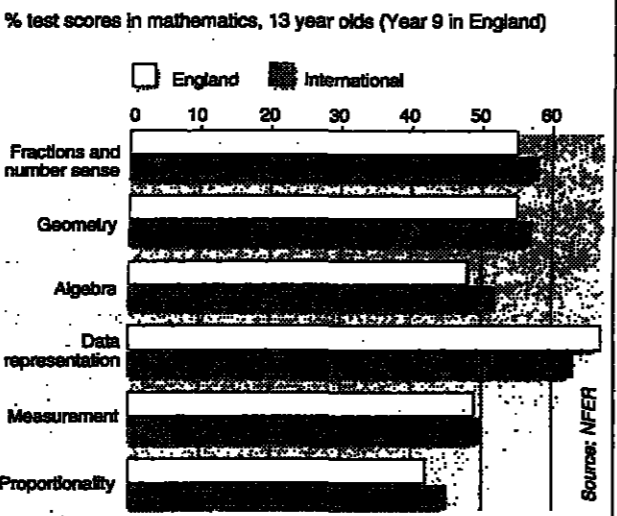
PHOTOGRAPH: MURDO MACLEOD

England falls behind in maths

Donald MacLeod
Education Correspondent

ENGLISH schoolchildren are falling behind other countries in mathematics but are among the world leaders in science, according to the largest ever educational study. Tests involving 500,000 students in 40 countries showed the performance of 13-year-olds in English schools had deteriorated compared with other countries since a study five years ago, according to the Third International Mathematics and Science Study published yesterday. England was significantly lower in maths than the Pacific rim countries and eastern European countries like Bulgaria, Russia and Hungary. In western Europe, England was on a par with Denmark and Germany but lower than Austria, Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland. But in science England was the equal or better than the rest of western Europe and behind only four of the countries surveyed: Japan, Korea, Singapore and the Czech Republic. England did slightly better than Scotland in maths and much better in science. Increased classroom time devoted to science since the introduction of the national curriculum could be one reason for the improvement, said Wendy Keys, co-author

Lagging behind



of the report. During the same period maths teaching had been cut by about 20 minutes a week in English schools. She and fellow researchers at the National Foundation for Educational Research are

Mathematics: top 20 countries

- 587; Russian Federation
- 585; Ireland 537; Canada
- 527; Sweden 519; New Zealand 508; England 506; Belgium 505; Czech Republic 504; Slovak Republic 547; Switzerland 545; France 538; Hungary

Ridings authority risks open war with Shephard

John Carvel
and Sarah Ryle

THE education authority yesterday risked open warfare with Gillian Shephard, the Education and Employment Secretary, when it rejected her demand for a prompt inspection of its services to pupils and parents at its schools. Michael Higgins, chairman of education at Calderdale council, said priority should be given to restoring good schooling at the Ridings, which had to close temporarily last month after a breakdown of discipline. He suggested that discussions about the Government's request for Chris Woodhead, the chief inspector, to examine the authority's entire operations should be postponed until January. Mrs Shephard was understood to be furious last night about the council's "inadequate" response and considering retaliation. She is seeking powers in the Education Bill to order the inspection of local education authorities. Officials were exploring the extent of her authority to order an immediate inspection of all Calderdale schools to get a full picture by other means. The row flared when Mrs Shephard complained about the council's decision to refer the issue to an education sub-committee. Mr Woodhead had a team standing by to start the inspection on December 2. "Calderdale's handling of it is outrageous that the local education authority should be anything other than wholly co-operative in welcoming an independent Ofsted inspection," she said. Mr Higgins said he did welcome the proposal, but his priority is to ensure that the Ridings school continues to receive extensive support. "That effort should not be disrupted," he suggested. "We are not dragging our feet." Labour accused Mrs Shephard of picking a fight with Calderdale to distract attention from the results of an international study showing English schools trailing badly in maths. The row also came as business leaders savaged her claims that standards in schools have improved over the last five years. As Mrs Shephard boasted that the latest round of league tables showed pupils doing better than ever, the Institute of Directors argued that the results were based on inflated grades. "The improvement in exam results in England is significantly higher than it is in Scotland which has a different education system. We believe that this can only be due to grade inflation of GCSEs and A levels." The IoD is especially worried about poor primary level education. The head of its policy unit, Ruth Lea, said: "Gillian Shephard was telling us the other day how wonderful the reading standards of 11-year-olds is now, but we think they look pretty dire." She said children were not being adequately prepared for the future demands of business, especially in the fields of languages and maths.

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Peter McKay: declined to drop Daily Mail column

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Leading on Europe's fast track

Royal wedding rumours in Spain

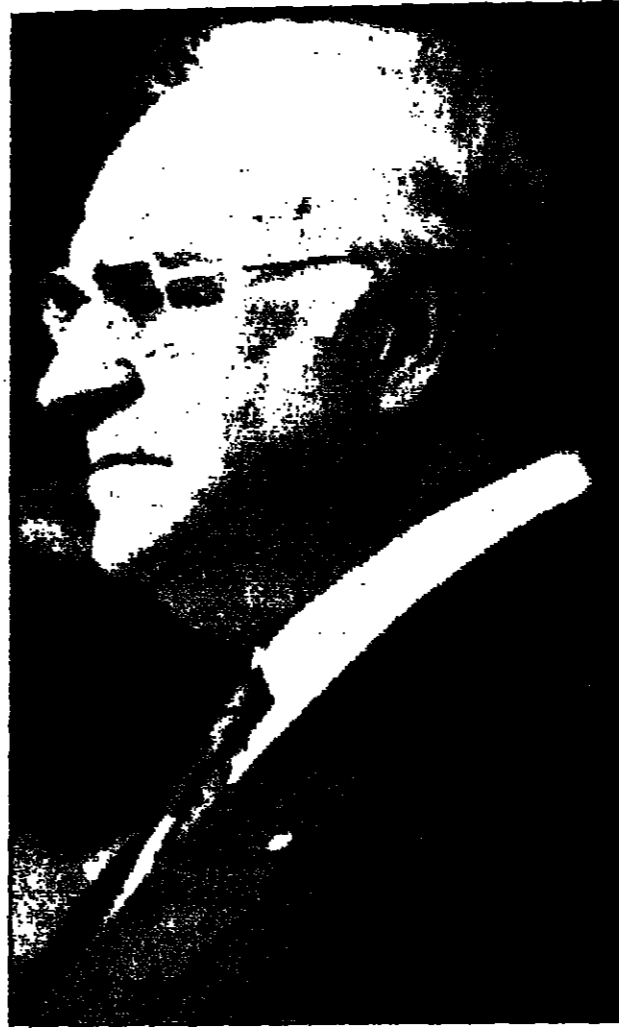
These days Chancellor Kohl prefers to talk of flexibility than of a hard core Europe, but his determination to implement joint policy-making by a small number of integrated EU states is unchanged.

Ian Traynor reports, in the fourth of his series, on Germany's quest to see Europe start to wield power before the proposed EU expansion to eastern Europe further dilutes the capacity for united action

Back to the future



Paralleled to the hard core drive being pursued at the EU inter-governmental conference runs the effort to get a single European currency launched by the end of the century. The 1994 policy paper saw monetary union as



Helmut Kohl: European division and impotence over the Bosnia crisis added to his resolve to make Europe powerful

The German Question

IT WAS in September 1994 that Chancellor Helmut Kohl's Christian Democrats raised eyebrows in Western capitals by floating the notion of a "hard core" Europe that would put Germany, France, and the Benelux states on a fast track to integration.

Such views, which might rankle in London, are not contentious in Bonn. An opposition foreign policy adviser said there was "no alternative" to the hard core concept.

Germany see Italy as a cheap holiday destination. It is another matter having the Italians on board for the single currency and playing a part in decisions on German economic affairs

This week's move by the Italian government to levy a special single-currency tax is the stuff of which Bundesbank nightmares are made. Increasingly, the German emphasis on eligibility for the single currency is on the sustainability of economic measures rather than quick-fixes aimed at making next year's statistics look good.

Yeltsin falters into Minsk crisis

David Hearst in Moscow

VISIBLY frazier, President Boris Yeltsin took his first tentative steps in front of a television camera yesterday, assuring sceptical Russians that he was "ready for battle" after his heart operation.



Boris Yeltsin, flanked by his wife Naina and granddaughter Masha, rests on a hospital bench in Moscow yesterday

that the operation produced the results.

Warning of his impending arrival back on the political scene, he said he would be calling his ministers and ministers to account.

taken place in the Russian city of Smolensk, midway between the Belarusian capital Minsk and Moscow. Mr Chernomyrdin was also due to attend.

In the event, only Mr Sharbatky and two Russian parliamentary leaders turned up.

AUDIT COMMISSION

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Belgian deputy PM goes before inquiry into child-sex allegations

THE Belgian deputy prime minister, Etio Di Rupo, fighting for his political life after allegations of sex with under-age boys, went to give evidence yesterday to the parliamentary commission investigating the charges, RTBF television said.

DRAMATIC SAVINGS BARD NONE

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Clinton reluct
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Clinton coaxes reluctant China

Andrew Higgins in Hong Kong

BILL CLINTON put China at the centre of American foreign policy for his second term yesterday, muting his concern for human rights and portraying China as a great power which will decide whether the 21st century brings peace or war.

In Canberra on the first leg of an Asian tour, Mr Clinton told the Australian parliament that Washington would keep 100,000 troops in the Pacific but did not seek to "contain" China's growing military and economic might.

"What the United States wants is to sustain an engagement with China," he said in his first major foreign policy speech since defeating Bob Dole. The speech ends a policy debate in Washington paralleling earlier arguments about "engaging" with South Africa under apartheid.

"The direction China takes in the years to come, the way it defines its greatness in the future, will help to decide whether the next century is one of conflict or co-operation," he said.

But his call for a "new partnership" found little echo in Beijing, where the old problem of Taiwan clouded the first day of a visit by the US secretary of state, Warren Christopher.

This is only Mr Christopher's second visit to China in four years, compared with

US may allow nuclear sales

THE United States said yesterday that it might allow American companies to sell limited types of nuclear technology to China, for peaceful use.

The decision was announced by Warren Christopher in Beijing after talks in which, he said, China promised to "formulate and adopt comprehensive nationwide regulations on nuclear export controls".

China has yet to meet all Washington's conditions for selling it peaceful nuclear technology, set out in a 1986 agreement. — *Reuters*

more than 20 trips to the Syrian capital Damascus. The previous one, in 1994, ended in fiasco, with a round-up of dissidents, a cancelled banquet and the US party eating alone in its hotel.

That and a subsequent downward spiral in Sino-US relations has encouraged speculation that the People's Liberation Army now dominates Chinese foreign affairs. Relations between Washington and Beijing fell to their nadir in March when China held missile tests off Taiwan and Mr Clinton sent two battle groups towards the island, which China considers a rebel province.

Diplomats say Mr Christopher will finalise a long-de-

layed visit to the US by China's defence minister, General Chi Haotian next month.

The Chinese army is deeply suspicious of US intentions, seeing its recent security agreements with Australia and Japan as a plot, Beijing accuses Washington of launching a "new cold war".

"The United States has no interest in containing China. That is a negative strategy," Mr Clinton said. He will repeat the message on Sunday to the Chinese president, Jiang Zemin, at the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation conference in Manila.

But China wants action on Taiwan, which continues to buy most of its weapons from the US, despite Washington's promise to phase out its sales.

"We can only be reassured when this promise turns into a reality," the Chinese foreign minister, Qian Qichen, told Mr Christopher yesterday in Beijing. "China is most concerned about massive sales by the US of advanced weapons to Taiwan."

This summer America delivered the first of 150 F-16 warplanes ordered by Taiwan when George Bush was in the White House to counter China's purchase of Russian Su-27 planes. Experts say a military balance now exists across the Taiwan Strait.

But a new arms race spiral could begin if China acquires an airborne early warning radar system. Among Western firms keen to sell such equipment to Beijing is Britain's GEC Marconi.



Miss Macedonia poses before Saturday's Miss World contest. Protesters say they will set themselves on fire in the stadium. PHOTOGRAPH: SHERWIN CRASO

Indian women plan suicide protest at Miss World contest

THE name of Kinay Narayana Shashikala could be on more lips than the winner of Saturday's Miss World competition if she carries out her threat to lead a multiple suicide protest against the contest.

Ms Shashikala, a law student who leads the Mahila Jagran Samiti (Forum for

Awakening Women), is fighting the exploitation of women in India. She fears that shows like Miss World undermine Indian culture. An estimated 2 billion viewers in 115 countries will watch the three-hour extravaganza to be held at Bangalore's Chinnaswamy cricket stadium.

Ms Shashikala said she would withdraw her threat if a strike called by a local leader of the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party succeeded in stopping the show.

One man has already burnt himself to protest against the pageant being staged in India. — *Reuters*.

Ms Shashikala and her supporters say they will mingle with the expected crowd of 20,000 and set their saris alight after swallowing cyanide. "Whatever the level of security, we will sneak in. We don't need petrol to douse ourselves, our nylon saris are inflammable," she said.

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One man has already burnt himself to protest against the pageant being staged in India. — *Reuters*.

News in brief

Tasmania gunman silent on motive

THE AUSTRALIAN who killed 35 people in a shooting spree at a Tasmanian tourist resort knows he faces a life sentence but refuses to say why he committed the massacre, his lawyer told the Tasmanian supreme court yesterday. Martin Bryant, aged 29, has pleaded guilty to the murders at Port Arthur, near Hobart, on April 28. He is due to be sentenced tomorrow.

His defence lawyer, John Avery, told the court that Bryant had refused to say why he opened fire. He added that Bryant was not criminally insane and revelled in the notoriety he had gained. — *AP, Hobart*.

Links between blacks urged

THE United States civil rights leader Jesse Jackson, on a week-long visit to Brazil, called for blacks in the two countries to form closer relations by building a "cultural canal".

"The African-American family has been separated from the Afro-Brazilian family for too long," he said. "Now we must build a canal between these families. Just as the Panama Canal connects two oceans, we must build a cultural canal."

More than half Brazil's 158 million population claims African ancestry. Mr Jackson's visit coincides with Brazil's black consciousness week. — *Agencies, Brasilia*.

Mladic fights his corner

GENERAL Ratko Mladic, defying his dismissal as commander of the Bosnian Serb army and supported by his senior generals, met President Biljana Plavsic yesterday to discuss a compromise, military sources said.

Ms Plavsic talked to Gen Mladic at his east Bosnian headquarters in Han Pijesak, from where he has fought attempts by the civilian authorities to replace his wartime command with junior officers hastily promoted to general rank.

The source said Ms Plavsic regretted having yielded to pressure from the former president Radovan Karadzic and Miroslav Krstjansk, the Bosnian Serb member of Bosnia's inter-ethnic presidency, to dismiss Gen Mladic.

Meanwhile, in Sarajevo, Britain's Lieutenant-General Sir Michael Walker handed over command of international ground forces in Bosnia to the US general William Crouch. — *Reuters, Belgrade*.

LA drug dealer gets life

THE former Los Angeles crack-cocaine dealer "Freeway" Ricky Ross has been jailed for life, without chance of parole, in a case which the black community says has suggested links between drug suppliers and the Central Intelligence Agency. Many black Americans have called the sentence racist.

Ross, a 36-year-old African-American, was supplied with cocaine by Oscar Danilo Blandon, a Nicaraguan exile, who used the money to help finance the CIA-supported contra war against the socialist government in Managua. Mr Blandon, himself jailed for drug dealing, was released from prison early when he became a government informant.

Outside the court in San Diego, Ross's mother Annie said: "Over and over, the government tries to destroy the black race. The CIA let the contras sell drugs to black people and the government didn't care." — *Christopher Reed, Los Angeles*.

Old soldier's fiery protest

A DISABLED Israeli army veteran was badly hurt when he set himself on fire outside the defence ministry in Tel Aviv yesterday. His daughter said it was a desperate appeal for state aid to buy a car.

Israel Radio said the man, aged about 60, was accompanied by his daughter when he set fire to himself. — *Reuters, Tel Aviv*.



Supporters give the fascist salute to commemorate the 21st anniversary of the death of General Franco, at the Valley of the Fallen Basilica near Madrid. PHOTOGRAPH: AP/WIDE WORLD

Haitians fear 200 on illegal voyage are lost at sea

AP in Port-au-Prince

NEARLY 200 people on an illegal boat voyage to the United States are missing and feared drowned, a Haitian radio station reported yesterday.

The independent Radio Metropole said there had been no word from the boat people since November 2, when they set off for Miami from Trou Choucheu, near the coastal town of Petit-Goave.

Friends and relatives have been gripped with fear since word of the disappearance began. On Monday they attacked the home of Rene Louis, who is suspected of organising the trip, the radio station said. Police arrived to save Mr Louis and his wife from the crowd. Illegal trips to the US are common as Haitians try to escape poverty.

Colombia plans to make Cali cartel pay

Mary Matheson reports from Bogotá on whether congress will finally pass laws to toughen up sentences on drug traffickers

IN LA PICOTA maximum security prison in Bogotá, a small kiosk sells Barbie dolls, Patterson's shortbread, aspirins and even Côte d'Or chocolate from Belgium.

Under a sign reading "Poor Miguel's Shop", it is run by Miguel Rodriguez, the billionaire leader of the infamous Cali drug cartel.

Mr Rodriguez, who has hidden most of his wealth in an intricate system of front companies, is also taking a business studies course.

The activities cut a third off his sentence, and a further third could be knocked off if he arranges a plea bargain.

In the end, the godfather of one of the world's most sophisticated criminal organisations could end up serving eight years and returning to freedom with most of his fortune intact.

Colombia is notorious for its lax narcotics laws, but congress is debating reforms to crack down on the barons who enjoy virtual impunity.

The maximum sentence for trafficking is 24 years, a far cry from the life terms awaiting many of the drug barons if they are prosecuted in the United States, and few serve anything like their full term.

"People get cuts for surrendering, informing on others. There are so many reductions that in the end the justice system practically owes the criminals time," complained the chief investigator of Cali's public prosecutors' office, Luis Fernando Vélez.

Some prisoners even received a reduction when the Pope visited Colombia 10 years ago.

The US government has often complained about Colombia's lenient sentences and the inability to seize illegal assets.

In July, after a drug corruption scandal which resulted in him being refused a US visa, President Ernesto Samper presented congress with reforms intended to prove his commitment to the struggle against drugs. They included 80-year sentences for trafficking and increased authority to confiscate ill-gotten gains.

But after nearly four months in congress, the bills are no nearer approval. Few Colombians believe they will be passed. The deputy chief prosecutor estimates that half the congress is involved in criminal activity — 10 are in jail for drug links.

Earlier this month the drug

barons' lawyers were seen mixing with MPs at congress during debates on the laws.

The sticking point is a proposal to make the laws retroactive, which would make the Cali barons liable to the harsher sentences.

"If congress doesn't approve retroactivity it is as if there is an amnesty in Colombia for what has happened until today," said a proponent of the reforms, Senator German Vargas Lleras.

Eager to avoid the new laws, some Cali barons are pleading guilty in return for reduced sentences.

Colombians are terrified that the reforms, along with a proposal to reintroduce extradition, may spark a violent reaction from the drug lords.

In the late 1980s, journalists and politicians in favour of extradition were murdered by traffickers.

Last week Cali police defused a car bomb outside a building belonging to the sen-

ator who has led efforts to pass the new laws, Claudia Blum. "Everyone proposing these projects has been threatened in pamphlets, letters or with calls at 1.30am. Every time I go to bed I disconnect the phone because I can't sleep," she said.

A group calling itself "National Sovereignty" has claimed responsibility. The police blame drug traffickers.

If congress fails to approve the laws, Mr Samper says, he will pass them by presidential decree. "The problem is that taking the executive road runs the risk of the decrees being declared unconstitutional," said the political editor of the national daily El Tiempo, Jesús Ortiz Nieves.

Failure to introduce the legislation would confirm to many that Mr Samper accepted drug money for his 1994 election campaign, and could bring down the wrath of the United States. That could bring economic sanctions.

EU takes America to court over Cuba

Washington threatens to ignore any ruling against Clinton's contentious and 'politically motivated' legislation, reports Mark Tran in New York

TENSION between Europe and the United States escalated sharply yesterday as American officials threatened to disregard any ruling from the World Trade Organisation that goes against the much-criticised US Helms-Burton law that aims to penalise countries trading with Cuba.

The American warning came as a newly created court established under the WTO in Geneva agreed to hear the European Union's legal challenge to Helms-Burton by the European Union, pushing the US into a tighter corner over a law that is proving highly unpopular with several of Washington's key allies.

US officials said that Europe's decision to push ahead with its case could undermine the two-year-old WTO, which was created specifically to resolve such conflicts.

"We do not believe that recourse to a WTO panel will lead to a resolution of this dispute," said US ambassador Booth Gardner. "On the other hand, we do believe that proceeding further with this matter would pose serious risks for this new and invaluable organisation, which is at the early stages of its development."

The Clinton administration had hoped to avert an escalation of its dispute with the EU over Helms-Burton — named after its two Republican sponsors — by an extended delay in applying the most draconian provision in the law, Title III. This section allows US citizens to sue foreign companies currently holding

property which was originally seized during the 1959 Cuban revolution.

Mr Clinton signed Helms-Burton in July, but froze Title III for six months and the waiver comes up for renewal in January.

The WTO's new panel of three neutral trade experts is expected to return its findings by mid-1997. European officials told the WTO that the EU did not contest the official aim of Helms-Burton to bring democracy to communist-ruled Cuba, but it did object to the way the US sought to impose its will on other countries.

tion calling for an end to the 30-year-old US trade embargo against Cuba.

Britain emphasised its anger with the United States over Helms-Burton by voting for the resolution, instead of abstaining as it has done in the past four votes. Britain has been especially critical of the "extraterritorial" scope of the US law.

The European challenge to Helms-Burton at the WTO is an important test case for the fledgling organisation. If the US carries out its threat to disregard an unfavourable ruling, the organisation could be fatally undermined.

The US has argued that the matter is not a trade matter but a foreign policy and national security issue linked to Cuba. As such, the US would be entitled to disregard a WTO decision on national security grounds.

The other 124 members of the WTO fear that such a move could set an unhealthy precedent for others to ignore WTO rulings on the same pretext. The WTO is already under some suspicion in Congress, which fears the scenario now playing itself out, with bureaucrats sitting in Geneva making unfavourable rulings against measures passed by Congress.

America's allies are particularly contemptuous of the Helms-Burton measure as they believe that it was signed by President Clinton for purely domestic political reasons.

Mr Clinton initially opposed the measure, but changed tack when Cuban fighters shot down two planes piloted by Cuban-American activists off the Cuban coast last February.

Diplomats also believe that Mr Clinton signed the law to curry favour with Cuban emigrés in New Jersey and Florida, states which he carried in this month's presidential election.

If Washington does disregard a WTO judgment against it the fledgling trade body could be fatally undermined

The US has found itself isolated over the Helms-Burton law. Earlier this month, Latin American countries condemned the law at the sixth annual Ibero-American summit in the Chilean capital, Santiago. In their first such concerted action, the 23 leaders urged the US to "reconsider the application of the law, which goes against international principles."

America's isolation on the Cuba issue was further highlighted by a vote at the United Nations last week, when 137 countries adopted a resolu-

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CSMA Working for you

Bombarding Mr Brown
But yesterday's missiles were well off-target

GENERALS always plan the next war on the basis of the previous one. Politicians take a similar approach to elections. That is why both parties believe that next year's general election will turn on tax and spending, just as the 1992 contest is generally deemed to have done.

For years now, Gordon Brown has been hammering and welding Labour into an ironclad unsinkable dreadnought on spending at the same time as probing away with increasing success at the Conservatives' claims to be trustworthy on tax. Listening to the Shadow Chancellor over those long months, only the proverbial fool in a hurry could seriously imagine that Labour is in taxing and spending mode this time.

Yet this is the case which the Conservatives are committed to establishing, and, since this is the age of the permanent election campaign, they are not waiting until the election is called before trying to make their point. But it is uphill work. Mr Brown's commitment to sound finances and his rigorous insistence that fresh programmes must come from within existing resources are almost beyond serious question.

He repeated these dogmas yesterday for the umpteenth time, imperiously emphasising that the only definition of a Labour commitment is one that can be found in the Road to the Manifesto document. Everything else, he said, including the speeches of shadow ministers and even Tony Blair's suggestion that this or that idea was under consideration, was ruled out by the Shadow Chancellor. This approach has delighted many surprising converts in British industry and commerce and, by the same token, is the despair of some of the party's traditional supporters. But it could hardly be clearer.

Nothing is more important for the Conservative Party than to breach a hole in these meticulously engineered

defences of Mr Brown's. That is why they launched a serious pre-dawn bombardment against them yesterday, releasing a document claiming to expose 89 different Labour spending commitments costing an alleged £30 billion pounds, the equivalent to £1,200 in extra taxes for the average family every year. It did not, however, work as the strategists had hoped. The way in which the document was released, amid claims that it was authorised by Sir Robin Butler, rightly caused an indignant reaction in Whitehall. And close examination of the Conservative allegations does not bear many of them out, as Labour's enthusiastic counter-bombardment went some way to show yesterday afternoon. The Tories have not shot their bolt, but they certainly spoiled their own case by exaggeration and by unrepentant over-confidence. In the end, the Conservatives may have loosened a few rivets in the ironclad but Labour strategists are right that the Tories have used too much of their best ammunition too early.

The Tories have always believed that they can do lots of damage to Labour on tax and spend policy. Some strategists see it as their number one election winning issue, much as it was in 1992. That is why they tried so hard yesterday. A week before the Budget, they planned to create a momentum which will enable Kenneth Clarke to put the party on the comeback trail in the polls. But the Tories do not enjoy the luxury of the nip-and-tuck party battle of 1991-92. They are so far adrift from Labour today that they need to start their electoral recovery much earlier in the cycle than they did last time. Yesterday was an act of calculated desperation. It didn't work. And it didn't work because, though Labour's defences are not absolutely watertight on all the charges, the allegations are essentially untrue.

Prevention is cheaper than cure

Britain's approach to crime policy needs a complete overhaul

FORGET the law-and-order rhetoric. Yesterday the Audit Commission looked at the reality. In a devastating report, based on extensive research into nine services which deal with juveniles, it set out a catalogue of waste, inefficiency and ineffectiveness. Remember, young people aged between 10 and 17 account for one quarter of all known crime. If unreported and unrecorded crime is included, the number of crimes of this small age group mounts to an estimated seven million a year. About £1 billion is currently spent pursuing and processing young offenders but to what effect? The Commission's figures reveal a sorry tale: of the seven million offences, a mere three per cent lead to arrest — 1.8 per cent receiving a caution and 1.3 per cent a charge. A quarter of the 1.3 per cent charged have their cases "discontinued". Just one per cent end up in court. And just 0.16 per cent receive Michael Howard's favourite recipe: custody. In a damning paragraph, the report notes: "Overall, less is done now than a decade ago to address offending by young people. Fewer young people are now convicted by the courts, and an increasing proportion of those who are found guilty are discharged."

So the Commission wants more in court and more custody? Far from it. It documents the huge costs of such procedures and the failure to intervene earlier to stop offending behaviour. It costs £1,200 for the police to identify a young offender and a further £2,500 to prose-

cute the offender successfully. The average offender goes to youth court four times before sentence but some have up to 10 appearances. The average gap between arrest and sentence is 120 days. Few sentences "are sufficiently intensive to challenge the behaviour of persistent offenders in ways that are likely to be effective."

Instead, the Commission points to programmes which confront young people with their behaviour and seriously reduce re-offending rates: caution plus in Northamptonshire, the Halt projects in Holland, and family group conference schemes in New Zealand. They are not cheap — about \$600 per offender in Northamptonshire — but are still one quarter of the cost of the present court-based system which is so hopeless at changing behaviour. The Commission, set up by this government to make public services more effective, has no political axe to grind. Andrew Foster, its controller, is unequivocal about the need for "a systematic overhaul". Neither victims nor offenders are being helped. Serious offenders — a small core committing more than 20 crimes a year each — require faster processing by courts. The less serious need more imaginative programmes. Most important of all are better prevention programmes. It's a rational recipe which Labour rightly endorses but predictably — and pathetically — the Home Office's headline ministerial gang finds hard to embrace. Sounding tough is not a solution. It's an opt out.

Not so strict on Maastricht

How to reduce your budget deficit without really trying

THE MAASTRICHT Treaty is fast turning Europe into a paradise for accountants. The dash to qualify for monetary union (especially the criterion requiring budget deficits to be brought down under 3 per cent of gross domestic product) has produced innovation worthy of a Turner prize. France set a cracking pace last month when the government received a one-off payment of £4.5 billion from France Telecom in exchange for taking over future pension liabilities (which will, of course, worsen government borrowing in future). Thus, at the stroke of an accountant's pen France reduced her public sector deficit by the equivalent of 0.5 per cent of GDP thereby bringing the economy close to qualifying for Maastricht. Not to be outdone, Italy has just announced a wheeze whereby it raises taxes by £2.2 billion next year in order to give it back to the same people in tax rebates and privatisation goodies from

1999. In this way the Italian government believes it can raise taxes to meet Maastricht terms without reneging on its promise to the electorates not to raise taxes — the Paul Daniels theory of economics.

If Italy, like France, is allowed to get away with this then other countries like Spain and Portugal on the Mediterranean fringe will also reach for their accountants as they all — curiously — seem bursting keen to join Emu with the first wave of founder applicants. If monetary union is led by countries with a cavalier disregard for real economic convergence then Emu won't be the austere Deutschmark-dominated regime that Germany envisages (with severe penalties for countries whose fiscal deficits breach the 3 per cent ceiling). The interesting question is under what terms, if at all, Germany would want to join a club that had become so permissive.

LABOUR'S TAX BOMBSHELL



Letters to the Editor

Doctors sharpen their scalpels

I AM afraid Andrew Anderson must cope with another very angry, even hysterical GP (Letters, November 19). I don't know where he gets his facts from but they are a million miles from my experience. True, many GPs delegate out-of-hours work, but the expense is met by their own reduced earnings and they remain legally responsible for their patients. Many other doctors, like myself and my partners, neither wish to delegate this work, nor could we even if we did want to. Where I live in west Wales there is no deputising and no locums. We have rather over 7,000 patients on our list and even if each one only calls once every 27 years, that is 260 night visits per year. And anyway what is an average patient? Mine may be old or young, rich or poor, sick or well. At night they are usually frightened and sometimes dying.

We allow each other six weeks' holiday a year on a paired system. When my opposite number is on holiday I drop from one in four nights on call to one in two and cover his surgeries. When I am on holiday he does the same for me. In effect you provide your own locum. You say there is no recruitment crisis: tell that to the doctors doing the work of two because they are unable to replace a partner who has left, or the hospitals recruiting foreign graduates as locum officers, because they cannot get home-grown ones to join their GP training schemes. Our self-employed status is rather strange, I agree. We have no right to refuse the mountain of extra work for no extra pay that has been foisted on us over the past few years. Where's the independence in that? (Dr) Ann Jay, Pencwrt, Llandysul, Dyfed SA44 5BB.

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Light at the end of the Chunnel

YOUR leader addressing the public's reaction to the Channel tunnel fire (November 20) was a well-balanced appraisal. People are right to consider the risks they run when engaging in any journey, be it long or short. So the better the balance of press coverage of transport accidents, the more accurate will be the general perception of relative risks. No one lost their life in this fire, and has yet to do so throughout the tunnel's two-year operation. Yet an average of 10 people are killed on the roads every day. It is tempting to call for safety measures to be introduced whatever the cost. But costs have to be met, and it is usually the consumer who has to do so. If this additional price on a ticket creates a deterrent to using a form of transport with a lower risk for another with a higher risk, this is counter-productive. Robert Gifford, Executive Director, Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety, St Thomas' Hospital, Lambeth Palace Road, London SE1 7EH.

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An ode to Essex

DAVID McKie's proposal to divide Essex is timely and, from the point of view of those brought up in Thurrock — or Gormandy, as he prefers to call it — much to be welcomed (In praise of the cleavage of Essex, November 20). McKie and his tweedy cohorts can keep their fantasy land of Far Tottering and Oyster Creek Essex in the north. They and their like fail to thrill to the noble sights of the Essex marshes nesting in the majestic, slow bend of the Thames as tawny as it winds out to the sea; they know nothing of the noble, industrial, almost Turnerian romanticism of the great quarries carved out by Tunnel Cement in the 60s and 60s; they are blind to the grand debauch of the Purfleet Pump as it enters Thurrock; they are deaf to the music of the ancient settlements of Fobbing, Mucking and Corringham which trip off the tongue as usually only once a year as Lolita did to Nabokov's. They have no pride in the great Lakeside Shopping Mall, or the distant fires of the refinery at Corringham — as awesome a sight as anything conjured up by Wright of Derby. These are the soils that bred George Walker the entrepreneur, Billy Walker the boxer, Mark Anthony Turnage the composer, raw,



gritty, modern. So shut yourselves up north of the A12 corridor, your lifeline to London, our inter-zonal frontier. Real life has always been lived south of it. John Tusa, 21 Christchurch Hill, London NW3 1JY.

Briefs encounter

DR Blomfield (Letters, November 16) refers to a Netherlands study involving the wearing of underpants for 24 hours a day over six months. My wife informs me that, far from impairing reproductive potential, it would undoubtedly be extinguished. John Wood, Garth Soar, Talsarnau, Gwynedd LL47 6UW.

NOTE that the BBC has banned the word 'weebing' as racist. I hope this will also bring an end to scotching everything from rumours to snakes. John Malcomson, 25 Victoria Road, Broomhall Park, Sheffield S10 2DJ.

THE allegation made by A Taylor (Letters, November 16) that members of the public need their postcode to report a gas escape is nonsense. Our staff have very clear instructions to gather information to identify where there is a problem. All anyone need do to report a gas escape is phone 0800 119999 and give an address or location. John Rodgers, North Area Emergency Services Manager, British Gas TransCo, PO Box 1GB, Killingworth, Newcastle upon Tyne NE59 1GB.

Arms and the ban: don't dump them abroad

LARGELY drowned out in the first day of the fire-arms debate was a plea for the UK Government to halt exports of these guns (A farewell to cant, November 20). Both the public and politicians agree that these weapons put human life at risk. Yet the Department of Trade and Industry is currently considering export licences to send the banned weapons overseas. As an unfortunate consequence of progress in domestic gun control, 150,000 banned guns could be exported, effectively sending abroad the very violence the UK wishes to stop at home. The Government should assure the UK public and the international community that the unlawful weapons collected as a result of the legislation will be publicly destroyed. This would surely be the most fitting response to the country's concerns over the rising tide of violence. It would also send a clear message to the rest of the world

that the UK's concerns about the dangers of weapons go beyond its borders. Geraldine O'Callaghan and Susannah Dyer, Research analysts, British American Security Information Council, Carrara House, 20 Embankment Place, London WC2N 6NN.

THE arms dealers who supplied the Rwandan regime before and during the 1994 genocide look like escaping their just deserts, thanks to registering on Mickey Mouse islands and the rumbblings of free-market politicians suddenly concerned about the loss of jobs. Such difficulties could be surmounted by indicting them at the International Court of Justice as accessories to genocide. But I doubt very much that this will happen. Colin Gill, 67 Union Road, London SW4.

A Country Diary

WEARDALE: It's easy to overlook the strangeness of the commonplace in the countryside. Take ivy, for example — a plant that's unique in the British flora. It's our only native representative of a tropical and sub-tropical plant family called the Araliaceae. How come that a plant with such exotic, gum-loving relatives should be so common in our chilly climate? It seems to be successful everywhere — entangled in woodlands, climbing walls and buildings, smothering tombs in churchyards and even dangling down cliff faces — but it's completely out of step with the rest of our wild flora. It's in full bloom now, just as all other flowers have faded and the first severe frosts are set to arrive, and it will postpone production of its black berries until spring, where much of the rest of the flora is coming into flower. Like many woodland climbers, ivy only blooms well in sunlight and only then do its leaves signal their intentions,

when toothed foliage of non-flowering shoots give way to simple leaves, before the simple heads of green flowers appear. A walk at dawn following a violent gale this week brought plenty of opportunities here for examining flowering specimens at close quarters, after rotten trees made unstable by their top-bumper of ivy had toppled over. One was an ancient, stag-headed oak, whose trunk and branches were sieved in the clamber. The ovaries of each flower, plumed with droplets of nectar and the blooms fairly hummed with drone flies, wasps, bluebottles, dung flies, hoverflies and moths, all enjoying their last feast before the frosts bite. The peculiar scent of the plant, which no doubt helps to attract these visitors, hung in the air — a stale scent of decay, reminiscent of damp, mouldering cupboards: memorable, but hard to explain like most other aspects of ivy. PHIL GATES

Diary

Dan Glaister

WITH the general election — wake up at the back, this is important — with the general election almost upon us, it is time for some pertinent questions. Such as: Why Vote Liberal Democrat? Or, indeed, Why Vote Labour? Tricky stuff, you'll agree. These questions will be addressed by William Wallace and the Blairite Tony Wright in a series of books to be published by Penguin in February. But what of the third title, Why Vote Conservative? It calls for a man with a firm grasp of the issues, a man at the heart of government, a man with a frank and honest way with syntax. Step forward David Willetts, MP, following on from the success of his previous books, the indispensable Modern Conservatism (1992) and the much sought-after Civic Conservatism (1994). This series includes stake-holding versus the free market, constitutional reform, and Europe. Dull but necessary, I suppose. But will Willetts address the rancid subjects bouncing around the Commons — sleaze, cash for questions, and the precise meaning of the word "want", or as all good civic conservatives say, "want"?

MORE election news: the Diary is happy, nay, ecstatic to be able to announce the formation of a new political grouping. Based on the astounding success of Republicans For Clinton, the time is right for a parallel exercise in cross-party confusion here. All stand, then, for the newly formed Conservative Party. The Diary takes delight in nominating as chairman Archie Norman, chief executive of Asda and the Tory candidate for that hotbed of radicalism Tunbridge Wells (maj 17, 1992). Last week Archie announced that it was possible the party might lose the next election. "Well, not just possible." Hmm. But who should join him in this great enterprise? And what of the membership of the rival group, Labour For Major? Archie's bunch is a much more shadowy affair. Even the proposed honorary chairperson has to appear in public under the clumsy pseudonym of Cassandra. Membership nominations for both groups on a post-card, please.

AT LAST, some hard news from the set of Eyes Wide Shut, wild man director Stanley Kubrick's shrouded-in-secrecy film currently under construction somewhere in the home counties. Joining the likes of Harvey Keitel, Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman is one Clive Froggat. That's Dr Clive Froggat to you, Maggie's health guru and latter-day self-confessed heroin addict. His missions to Miss Kidman as she struggles with her addict's role. "I am not allowed to talk about the film," says the good doctor, "but I was brought in to add authenticity to the acting."

NOW that God Rock has returned with the resurrection — geddit? — of Jesus Christ Superstar, it's time to sneak a look at some of the more inspired offerings for the Age of the Musical. Enid Blyton's Famous Five is currently seeking investors, although it is understood a shortfall may result in a staging of Enid Blyton's Less Well-Known Four. Barring disasters the all-singing, all-dancing Raise the Titanic should have into view any day now, but the most entertaining has to be Always, a musical about Edward VII and Mrs Simpson, the Fergie and Andy of their day. Now wait a minute... Fergie — The Musical. Any investors out there?

COMMISERATIONS to Trevor Froudfout. He moved to the model village of Turville 10 years ago. "On the first morning, I looked out of my window to see Melvyn Bragg talking to John Mortimer and I thought, 'This is going to be an interesting place.'" Blighted, dahling.

ONE question for the long-suffering Mrs Lilley, following the affirmation of her husband's true-blue heterosexuality to Hello! magazine: Why, Gail, why?



Feel free to bang the drums of Europe

Commentary

Hugo Young

IF YOU had to think of a subject that is perfectly intelligible for putting to a referendum, you couldn't do better than European economic and monetary union. It is highly technical, extremely complicated and very tedious. Although the question will always be a mélange of politics and finance, the more precisely it is put, the more baffled the voters are bound to be. After all, most of the experts are few can say with certainty what affects EMU will have, whether it will work, how to cut the arguments for and against British membership. Most of those who disclaim agnosticism offer nothing more than prejudice. So what are the people, with better things to think about, meant to do? EMU is surely the very issue we pay politicians to bury their heads in, and then come up with an answer.

Nevertheless, a referendum there will be. The parties can do no other. I think Labour's new commitment, mimicking the Tories, changes the landscape far more than most people suppose. It makes sterling's early membership less likely. But it also makes a realistic debate about Europe, at last, easier to conduct. Though construed as a cheap sceptic move, it's the biggest opportunity the pro-Europe side has had to begin to change the terms of a contest it is losing.

Labour's decision wasn't made, I'm assured, in a lurch towards scepticism. I can believe it. Scepticism, in the exact meaning of the word, has infused Labour minds for months. The great unknowns of who, when, how and under what rules EMU might happen impress themselves on Messrs Blair, Cook and Brown equally. The decision rested on two judgments. First, the evidence on these vital unknowns won't be in before the election, which makes any distinguishing election pledge impossible. Second, even a Labour House of Commons might not pass the statutes necessary for EMU without also passing some backbenchers' amendment demanding a referendum beforehand. Get real. Mark the moment. Alongside popular befuddlement sits the political class's feeling that the people must decide. To put it at its lowest, every party now judges that it needs the people's cover before taking what may always turn out

to be the wrong decision. Such abdication, however, won't come easily. Consider what must happen. First, the Cabinet agrees that EMU is in Britain's interest. After that, it may not be hard to get the party to go along. But the original decision will never be taken unless the Cabinet believes the party and country will follow. Things might then formally proceed along the lines laid down in today's report from the Commission on the Conduct of Referendums, an admirable practical blueprint which will be much thumbed by referendum-hungry Labour ministers. Before they are set in motion, the massive hurdle of political confidence in victory has to be surmounted.

This changes the rules of government. The change may be necessary, but it is huge. Complex, controversial and hazardous Acts, which at first might not enjoy popular support, are being whipped through Parliament all the time. In calculating the national interest, government takes responsibility and financial objections with its Commons majority. It doesn't have to put its life at risk in a free vote of the nation. Once that element is introduced, government is certain to be more cautious. When it also has to reckon, as with EMU, that whatever the technical arguments may then be, more than half the press will be vis-

cerally opposed, one sees how far this project must shift before any government is likely to undertake it. A case now bedevilled by deep imponderables must somehow be transformed into one of transcendent clarity before any Cabinet will risk putting it to the country.

That isn't impossible to imagine. I think it extinguishes the near-invisible prospect of sterling yielding to the euro in 1999. But it keeps open the chance of entry 2002. If EMU goes at the earlier date, it may then invite an urgent question: do you, the British, want to be left out of something that may otherwise destroy your lifeblood? If and when that occurs, moreover, it cannot be a technical question, for the simple reason that most voters regard themselves as incapable of addressing it in such a way. It will, whatever the precise terms, be taken as

a broad issue between pro and anti-Europeans. This is where the new all-party referendum promise is already a spur to change politics for the better.

The state of the broad issue is at present deplorable. The Europhobic in Britain has become one-sided. Victory goes to the loudest voices, the crudest scare-mongers, the least scrupulous fantasists, the most sentimental nationalists. We have a gov-

ernment much of whose work is inside the EU, running a country more than half of whose trade is with EU countries, peopled by ministers hardly one of whom will be caught making a statement of affection, support, solidarity or even minimal approval for any aspect of EU activity. It is a government of faint-hearts, in thrall to a press that has surrendered objectivity to one-eyed hysteria, which drags the Labour Party, flapping and nervous, in its wake.

There are different reasons for this. In some quarters one can find reasoned rejection, often lately discovered, of British participation in the EU. Or an obsessive passion not always paranoid, against the baleful influence of Brussels. There's also legitimate opposition, on either financial or political grounds, to EMU. The counter-voice on all these fronts, however, has been inhibited by fear. It has been incompetently put, arrogantly neglected. But also held back by a deep suspicion that the public will not wear it, because the public thinks "Europe" is a plot from which it has been excluded.

The promise of a referendum begins to eliminate that fear. Now that the voters know the issue will be put to the question, those who believe with passion that Britain belongs in Europe have no reason to keep silent. The thrill of paranoia is lifted. They need no longer be throttled by guilt. They can make an open case, knowing that the people will have the better to judge it. If the right verdict is to come, the case starts, with some urgency, now. Changing the terms is a long haul. For the present state of national disillusion, the cowardly Euro-phobes are as much to blame as the tireless chicanery of Euro-phobes. The referendum opens up their duty to repent.

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Civil Service leaks lead to corrosion



Ian Aitken

WHITEHALL legend has it that there was once a private secretary to a senior Conservative minister who loyally did her job on behalf of the government during the working day, but always took time before she went home to tell her boss exactly what she thought of everything he'd just done. Far from leading to a hostile relationship, the minister admired her for successfully reconciling her personal views with her duty as a civil servant.

The private secretary in question was, I believe, Clare Short — now an equally forthright Labour frontbencher. Her ministerial boss is alleged to have been Mark (now Lord Carlisle, a Home Office minister during the Heath government who was subsequently sacked by Mrs Thatcher as an incorrigible wit.

The story has a certain old-world charm, since Whitehall has changed since then. Nowadays, a similarly minded civil servant would hesitate to speak his or her mind for fear of blighting their career. Instead they would probably photocopy the evidence of what was going on, stuff it into a plain brown envelope, and post it off to some shadow minister or better still, deliver it to Dale Campbell-Savours.

This development has generated some splendid exposure stories, many of them in this newspaper. Moreover, they have helped to keep our system of democratic accountability working in a civil servant's particular secrecy and even outright dishonesty — a climate created by the Thatcher government and sustained by her successor.

For 30 years I operated largely on the basis of leaks. Most of them were "official" leaks, slipped out on purpose through Whitehall's formal network of private briefings, and therefore essentially government propaganda. But the really good stories — the ones which the government didn't want us to know — invariably came from "unofficial" sources.

That usually meant politicians, a few of whom were, God bless them, simply people who couldn't keep a secret. Most, however, were skilled practitioners in the art of the purposeful leak. Until Mrs Thatcher took the stage, leaks from career civil servants (as opposed to so-called ministerial "advisers" from outside

Whitehall) weren't just rare; they were almost unthinkable.

So why the change? One reason is the sheer shabbiness of much of what this Government is doing under the cloak of confidentiality. Another is the steady and intentional mix of politicisation and deliberate destabilisation which has been government policy towards the Civil Service ever since 1979.

But does all this justify sending plain brown envelopes to opposition MPs? At the risk of shocking some old friends, I think it doesn't. The conduct of government becomes virtually impossible if every memo from one ministerial office to another is liable to end up in Mr Campbell-Savours's mail box. Moreover, the civil servants who do it are breaching the most fundamental of their duties — loyalty to the elected government of the day, however awful.

Before Labour MPs dismiss my attitude as pompous nonsense, let me remind them that quite a lot of civil servants dislike Labour just as much as today's leakers hate the Conservatives. Indeed, it's not long since Labour MPs shared Mrs T's hostility to the Civil Service; they saw it as a built-in obstacle to any minister trying to pursue policies in conflict with the Whitehall consensus.

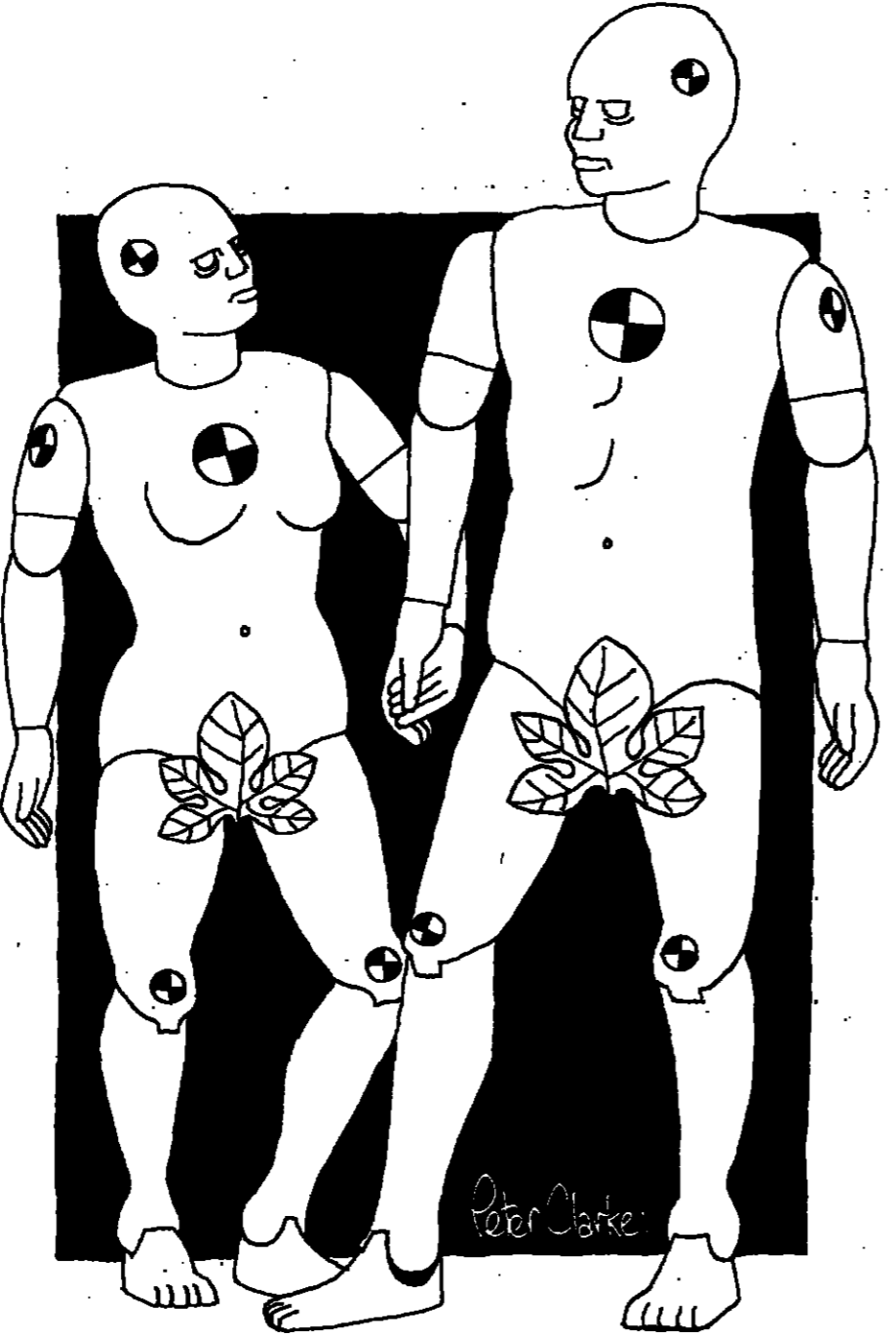
That doesn't mean that Labour should renounce acting on leaks. But it does suggest that shadow ministers would be wise to be cautious about how they profit from them. They must know that they will almost certainly be the victims of a similar campaign of vengeful counter-leaks when they finally get their hands on the levers of power. To amend the biblical message, he who lives by the leak may very well perish by the leak.

WE discovered again yesterday why so hate this Government so much that they are prepared to abandon their duty to the Queen's ministers. The blatant way in which they are being used to supply the arithmetical backdrop for Tory election ploys like Dr Mawhinney's dreadful tax scare should be enough to outrage even a mandarin who is ticking off the days until he takes up his fat-cat retirement job with some merchant of death.

And it is worth remembering that Dr Mawhinney is himself one of the Queen's ministers — albeit one whose duties are kept to a minimum so that he can devote most of his time to his real job, which is running Tory Central Office. Only the Conservatives would have the barefaced effrontery to give their Tammany Hall boss a fancy title, a red box and a seat at the Cabinet table. But then, barefaced effrontery is what this Government is good at.

Stephen Woolley rounds on the politicians who have banned the film Crash, and argues no good comes from such censorship: do they really think its viewers will go crashing their cars for kicks?

Head-on collision



Tell the truth about the Tunnel fire

Memo to Eurotunnel from Keith Harper, Transport Editor, on the the obfuscation following what could have been a disaster

HERE you go again. At the first sign that something is wrong, you put up the shutters and say nothing. That was your belligerent attitude during the construction of the Channel Tunnel. And you've returned to this negative theme over the past two days while public disquiet over the Channel Tunnel fire continues to be fanned by disinformation and half truths.

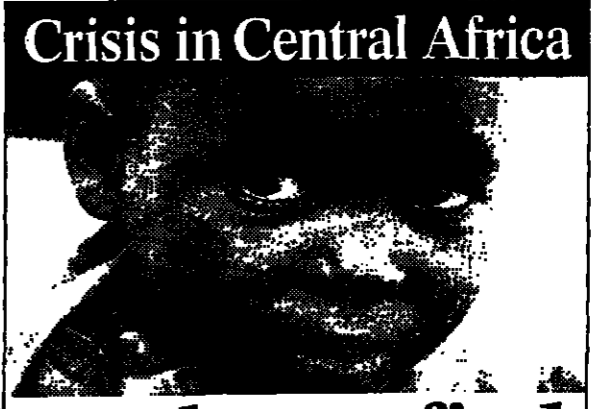
It has been virtually impossible to get the truth. They have dribbled out in short, reluctant statements, forced by the observations of some of the

thousands of people indirectly involved in the incident — staff, passengers, and the magnificent rescue crews.

You never owned up to the embarrassing possibility that the fire could have been on the train before it entered the tunnel until the French public were informed via a security guard. Your chairman, Robert Malpas, blithely admits that "this is something that has to be investigated". That's putting it mildly. If security guards at Calais, or at Folkestone for that matter, have no direct link to your commu-

nications system, then they should have. We would like to know who was in charge of the train, the driver or the conductor.

The driver chose not to continue his journey to Folkestone, but your company's rules suggest that he should have done. And why were lorry drivers choking with smoke in their carriage when the fire was behind them, and the draught from the train should have been carrying the smoke away?



"Help me find my mummy"

Imagine the terror and panic for a child separated from loved ones in a vast crowd of people. This is the reality facing thousands of children in Rwanda today as their families make the long trek home.

Save the Children has already provided emergency food and medical supplies to help save lives and our staff are working round-the-clock to protect and reunite children with their families. But we need your help to continue this vital work.

Please make a donation now. Post the coupon below or call us on 0171-703 5400 (24 hour hotline)

Save the Children logo and donation form details including fields for name, address, and donation amount.

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Fax: 0171-833-4456

Finance Guardian

Freemans sale order leaks

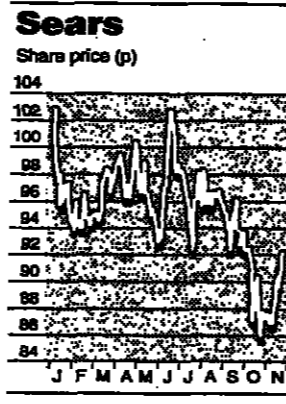
Strong puts stop to Sears fumbling

Paul Murphy

L IAM Strong, the embattled chief executive of Sears, is set to respond to intense institutional pressure for a shake-up at the retailing giant by putting the group's Freemans mail order operation up for sale.

City analysts reckon the business, which includes titles such as One to One and a cable TV operation Home Shopper, as well as the main Freemans store, might fetch \$500 million.

pressure to consolidate the group's mish-mash of retailing interests for the last four years. Mr Strong's efforts to sort out Sears' unwieldy shoe businesses came unstuck in the June when Stephen Hinchliffe's Facis group — to which Sears had sold around 400 stores — collapsed.



at investment bank MeechPierson, who is forecasting pre-exceptional profits of £115 million for the group this year against the £120 million achieved last year, has suggested Sears might be worth 120p-a-share or £1.8 billion on a "break-up valuation."

Institutional investors have been irritated by the non-performance of Sears stock which — at 92 1/2p yesterday — has not made any headway since Mr Strong joined the company in 1992. But chairman Bob Reid has continued to stress his support for his chief executive at every public opportunity.

through a special dividend, but the group is also thought to be keen to pump money into the development of the Selfridges department store business.

Notebook

Good morning to positive option



Edited by Alex Brummer

WHEN the Tories launched its tax and spend offensive against Labour at the last election it had little choice: the green shoots of recovery were barely visible, so going negative was the only option for holding on at Downing Street.

life and investment services, said that people were increasingly aware that they could not rely on either the state or their employers to provide for them in their old age. This was a serious issue facing our society and NatWest felt it was proper that it should put forward some practical solutions.

Mr Churchill conceded that the project would have some commercial benefits for the bank, but he insisted that it was first and foremost altruistic.

Cable lift-off

WHAT a change the management reshuffle has brought to Cable & Wireless. First the unexpected deal merging Mercury with leading cable companies and now sound financial results.

Pensions putsch

NATWEST is not normally reckoned to be a maverick in the most inspired operators. It has developed an unfortunate reputation for over paying for acquisitions which prove to add somewhat less to the business than may have been anticipated.

This time, there is the opportunity for a very different message on the lines of "its morning again in Britain", of the kind which has carried US presidents as different as Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton back to the White House.

How much more pleasant for the public to see the face of new industrial Britain and ringing bells in the new breed of out-of-town shopping centres than listening to Messrs Mawhinney and Waldegrave ranting about secret Labour tax plans, which are a figment of their imagination.

The real economy, albeit due to an accident of the foreign exchange markets in September 1992, when the pound dropped out of the exchange rate mechanism, has moved decisively the Tory way. This week has seen shop tills ringing up 4.1 per cent year-on-year, evidence of sharp recovery in the housing market, the pound looking stronger and even the public finances coming back into line.

Moreover, heavier corporate borrowing suggests a recovery in capital spending. Good tale that, which would put the opposition on its mettle: but it has been neutered by negativism.

Campaigners find workers on £1 a day

Martyn Halsall

POVERTY campaigners will today call for changes in employment law when they unveil a "depressing insight" into the working lives of agency workers, some of whom earn as little as a pound a day.

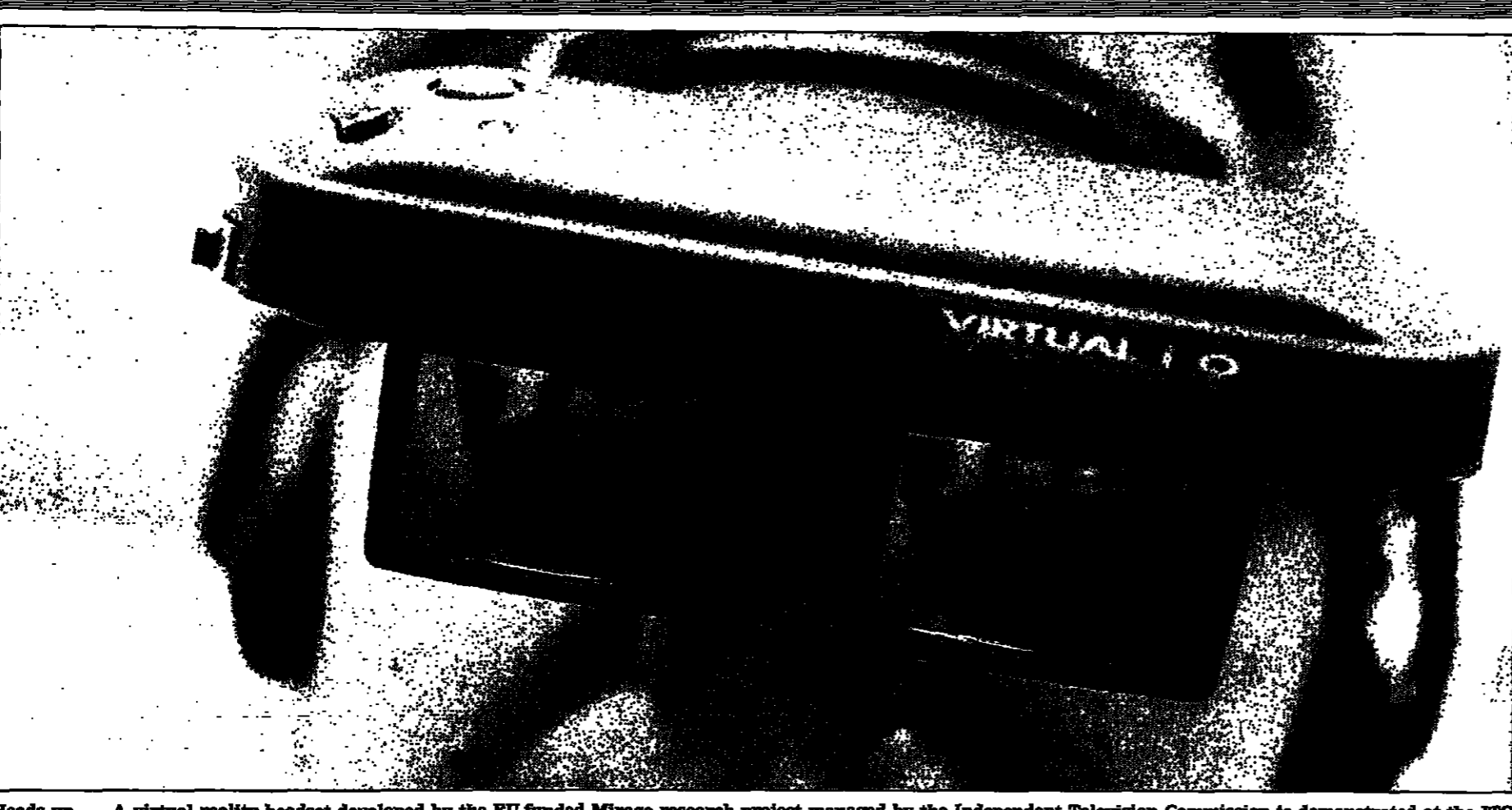
in the same workplace, according to the survey. "The agency workers surveyed give a depressing insight into what so-called 'flexible' employment actually means for many people," said Barry Navarro, the report's author.

Over three-quarters of those who responded said they took agency work because there were no permanent jobs.

According to a survey by the Greater Manchester Low Pay Unit and the region's citizens' advice bureaux, a night warehouse worker was paid £3 for a 36-hour week, when he should have earned £180.

TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS

Australia 2.04	France 8.25	Italy 2.482	Singapore 2.28
Austria 17.22	Germany 2.45	Malta 0.5780	South Africa 7.58
Belgium 33.42	Greece 330.00	Netherlands 2.74	Spain 206.00
Canada 2.19	Hong Kong 12.86	New Zealand 2.29	Sweden 10.94
Cyprus 0.74	India 58.72	Norway 10.35	Switzerland 2.86
Denmark 46.44	Ireland 0.9702	Portugal 248.00	Turkey 163.949
Finland 7.53	Israel 5.41	Saudi Arabia 6.25	USA 1.6418



Heads up... A virtual reality headset developed by the EU-funded Mirage research project managed by the Independent Television Commission is demonstrated at the ITC Engineering Exhibition in London. Scientists at Mirage are developing methods of evaluating the psychological impact upon the viewer of such technologies. PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID SILLITOE

Jingling of tills music to Tories

Richard Thomas and Teresa Hunter

BUOYANT consumer confidence, building society windfalls and a strengthening housing market are fueling an autumn high street mini-boom, according to figures released yesterday.

signal that consumers are becoming less price-sensitive. David Bloom, UK economist at James Capel, said: "The worry is that with the economy picking up and the 'feelgood' factor returning, consumers will be prepared to pay higher prices."

The Building Societies Association confirmed yesterday that activity in the housing market continues to grow, with mortgage demand hitting a five-year high and first time buyers rushing to get on the property ladder.

Mr Coles urged the Chancellor to use next week's budget to provide a stable economic backdrop, and reduce fears about interest rate rises.

The Budget

What was in last November's budget? The Guardian's distinguished panel of economic commentators has set its sights on the Chancellor, based upon expert knowledge and insight into the real economy.

Greyhound stadium loses dog eat dog battle

Ian King

GREYHOUND racing at London's Hackney Stadium is to come to an end after the dog track — which went into receivership in October last year — was yesterday sold to a property developer for an undisclosed sum.

Buffeting for utilities ICI attacks US takeovers

Chris Barrie and Simon Beavis

THE Trade Secretary, Ian Lang, came under new pressure to block further electricity takeovers last night as one of Britain's biggest companies attacked the way US utilities were taking control of the industry.

denance to the Commons trade and industry committee. With other industrial groups it launched a stinging attack on the structure of the electricity industry and its privatisation and warned that power and voltage cuts were on the increase.

However, Hackney — faced with competition from nearby tracks at Romford and Walthamstow — was forced into receivership after its opening night.

With Virginia-based Dominion also bidding — £1.4 billion for East Midlands — half the race in England and Wales could soon be in US hands.

IoD defuses Mawhinney torpedo

Simon Beavis Industrial Editor

DR BRIAN Mawhinney's attempt to torpedo Labour's windfall tax plans backfired yesterday as the right-wing Institute of Directors admitted the economic impact of the levy would be "insignificant" and a leading shareholder group contradicted Tory claims that it would hit customers.

Although the IoD is against the tax — largely on the grounds that it would be hard to compute and to implement and that there are better ways for Labour to fund its employment proposals — its position is surprisingly conciliatory.

IoD defuses Mawhinney torpedo

Simon Beavis

IoD's views emerged in evidence to the Commons trade and industry committee.

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Pitted against the past



A SMALL West Glamorgan community ravaged by unemployment is at the centre of a classic conflict of interest over plans to create an open-cast coal mine on an Iron Age site of unique archaeological value, writes David Goss.

A Cardiff-based mining company, LEJH, yesterday saw its application to mine 140,000 tonnes of coal at Brynref, near Seven Sisters, deferred for a month by Neath Port Talbot council's development committee following protests by Friends of the Earth and archaeologists.

The local community backs the new mine as LEJH has agreed to remove an unsightly tip as well as creating jobs. Paul Graves-Brown (pictured), an archaeological consultant and Swansea FoE member, said: "Any

planning approval without a proper archaeological excavation would be a catastrophe. This is a unique site of national importance both to Wales and to Britain as a whole."

PHOTOGRAPH: JEFF MORGAN

News in brief

Abbey National woos super-rich Asians

ABBEY National is joining the growing number of high-street financial institutions offering offshore bank accounts for wealthy Asians by setting up a joint venture with City-based Hambros Bank and Dah Sing Financial Holdings of Hong Kong. The institution, which will be registered in the Channel Islands, will be targeted at clients in Hong Kong and other parts of South-east Asia with a minimum of £150,000 to invest. Abbey and Hambros will each put in £5.6 million to set up the proposed D A H Private Bank, Dah Sing, which has an existing Hong Kong client base, will retain control. — Patrick Donovan

Chiroscience buys Darwin

CHIROSCIENCE, the Cambridge-based biotechnology company, is buying US genetic engineering specialist Darwin Molecular Corporation — in which Microsoft's Bill Gates is a shareholder — in a deal worth about £72 million. Chiroscience's chief executive, Dr John Padfield, said the deal — officially a merger — would enable each company to tap into the expertise of the other. Chiroscience was founded in 1992 and floated on the Stock Exchange two years later at 150p per share. The shares have since rocketed in value on the back of biotechnology's City popularity. — Pauline Springate

Courtaulds looks to Tencel

CHEMICAL company Courtaulds yesterday shrugged off disappointing first half results, pointing to growth in its continuing operations and the sustained success of the new fibre Tencel. Pre-tax profit for the six months fell from £68 million to £64 million but that was because of disposals. Operating profit from continuing businesses rose by 7 per cent to £80 million, from sales of just over £1 billion. — Roger Coate

Chubb poised on the Rim

CHUBB Security, the locks and alarms group, is to boost its presence in the Asia-Pacific region through the acquisition of one of Australia's leading manufacturers of fire-fighting equipment. It is paying AS\$20 million (£104 million) for the fire protection and access control businesses of James Hardie Industries, which together made a profit last year of £2.8 million on turnover of £115 million. — Dominic Walsh

US carrier orders Boeing jets

AMERICAN Airlines, British Airways' proposed partner, will today announce a \$3.75 billion order for "several hundred" Boeing passenger jets to take it through to the year 2020. The new planes will replace older models in the US carrier's fleet, like Airbus and Fokker. — Keith Harper

Foods chief backs EMU as sterling hits profit

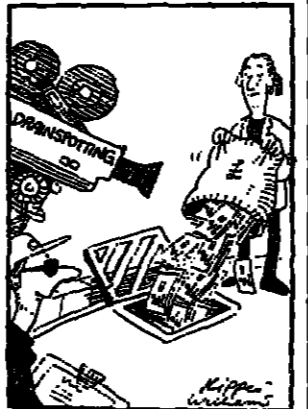
Roger Coate

CHRIS Haskins, chairman of Northern Foods which has been buffeted by currency fluctuations and European Union agriculture policy, yesterday renewed calls for monetary union to reduce the volatility of company profits. Introducing six months' financial results, which included a dismal performance from the company's dairy business, Mr Haskins, an avowed Labour supporter, said the pound's gyrations had exaggerated dairy profits last year, and had now driven them down too far. "If there is one company chairman that thinks EMU is a good deal, it's me", he said. Profit from Northern's dairy division slumped by £9 million to £22 million, largely because of the impact of sterling's strengthening on commodity milk prices. Falling prices over the past year for commodities such as



Chris Haskins... for monetary union

skimmed milk powder and butter fat had resulted in losses on these products as the price of milk through the dominant UK supplier, Milk Marque, has risen. Describing the system for marketing milk as "a farce", Mr Haskins called for a reduction in prices in the next tendering round to reflect the fall in open market prices. But he said the dairy division should not suffer further pain following the extensive rationalisation of the past three years, during which Northern has cut the number of dairies from 10 to four. He dismissed suggestions that he was ready to sell the dairy business, saying: "After all the pain of the last few years we would be really stupid to get out now." But he predicted there would be further rationalisation of the industry over the next couple of years to reflect falling consumption of liquid milk and the continuing shift from doorstep delivery to supermarket purchases. Northern confirmed the message on Tuesday from rival Unigate that the slump in doorstep sales was slowing down. Mr Haskins said sales were now falling at a rate of 9 per cent a year, compared to 13 per cent last year, despite a recent price increase of 1p per pint which brought the price to 39p.



Underside

Dan Atkinson

WOULD-be cine moguls: PolyGram's film offshoot has eight places on a course for those keen to develop "the business skills, experience and contacts... essential in today's filmed entertainment sector". The scheme is run jointly with the European Union Media Programme, which infamously part-bankrolled a TV

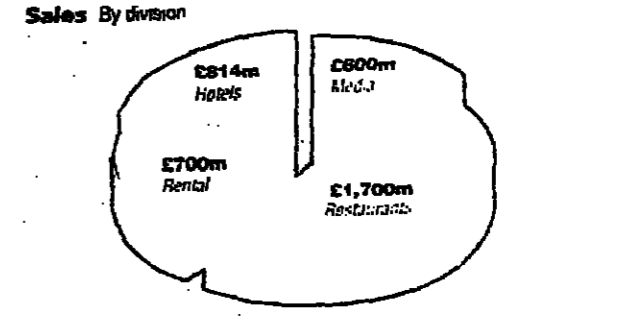
thriller in which the evil British murdered lots of people to frustrate European unity. PolyGram is well-placed to advise on cinematic success: in its interim results, operating losses on the film side were down from about £52 million last time to £48 million-odd. SO WHAT were the final 10 words of Kevin Maxwell's defence? The Guardian man's shorthand on November 29 recorded Alan Jones QC as quoting an Elizabethan poet thus: "More geese

OUTLOOK/

Chairman's £100m pledge on savings looks very attainable as Forte businesses come under the spell of new owners after only eight months, says IAN KING

Granada

Stock market value	£7.5bn	Main activity:	Hotels, restaurants, media and rental
Share price	881 1/2p 11p		
Workforce	79,500		
Interest cover	3.4		
	£	% change	
Sales	2.8bn		+60
Pre-tax profit	480m		+37
Earnings per share	42.3p		+8
Dividend	13.0p		+11



Granada profit justifies means

DURING his epic £3.9 billion takeover bid for Forte much abuse was hurled at Granada chairman Gerry Robinson, not least over his pledge to write £100 million in savings out of the prey in its first year under his control. As Granada unveiled its annual results yesterday — pre-tax profits up 37 per cent to £480 million in the year to September — that £100 million figure was very much to the fore, and Mr Robinson was adamant that it will be achieved.

Yet it is a delicious irony that, amidst a solid set of figures, two of the best performing businesses in Granada's ever-expanding portfolio are the Exclusive Hotels and Welcome Break motorway services chain, both former Forte assets and both up for sale. According to Mr Robinson, this is no coincidence — Welcome Break's profits had been static or falling for several years and were ripe for turnaround, both it and the Exclusives benefiting from Granada's aggressive management. If yesterday's results are anything to go by, the more damning criticism that can be applied to Granada is the fact that profits growth at many of its older businesses have slowed down. For instance, in television — the group's traditional heartland — Granada TV notched up a mere 3 per cent improvement in sales, while the more recently acquired LWT managed 11 per cent. Rentals, which five years

ago accounted for almost 30 per cent of group earnings, saw profits grow by a paltry 3 per cent, while sales actually fell after further shop closures. Such figures almost certainly justify the arguments put forward by Mr Robinson's adversaries over recent years — LWT's Sir Christopher Bland in 1993-94, Sir Rocco Forte in 1995-96 — that Granada needs large, high-profile takeovers to keep expanding. In fairness to Mr Robinson, and his chief executive Charles Allen, the impressive profits growth achieved at

Hotel to Mianmar Orwood for £36 million. Of the hotels, Granada intends to keep the Posthouse chain — bringing higher returns through a more aggressive pricing system, while the Meridian Hotels chain — subject of a highly publicised U-turn by Granada during the bid — flourishes. In restaurants, the biggest contributor to group profits, Granada continues to overhaul the Little Chef chain. Meanwhile, brand tie-ups with the likes of Burger King, Harry Ramsden's and Rock Island Diner are also being introduced. The Travelodge chain looks set for expansion, with more than 3,000 new rooms planned over the next three years.

That leaves the bedeviled rentals and media businesses, now the smallest parts of Granada's activities, which even Mr Robinson concedes could exist as a separately quoted outfit. A spin-off looks unlikely for the time being though, not least because Thorn EMI's experience has shown that once a demerger is talked about, the City is not interested in anything else. Besides, there is still good money to be made from TV, although the long-awaited full bid for Yorkshire-Tyne Tees will not materialise until that company's share price drops to more realistic levels. This explains why Mr Robinson was at pains yesterday to rule out a sale of Granada's BSkyB stake in the "short to medium term". It is also why Granada may yet have a tilt at a weaker-looking media rival like Pearson.

ECENTRIC Ladyland: Governor Eddie George has fingered what it is banks do to deserve all that legal mollycoddling and those shylocking interest rates: they take risks. He told the Treasury select committee on Monday this is the heart of their social contribution. Interesting, then, to note the explosive growth in credit derivatives, instruments allowing banks to insure against sour loans (i.e. risk). Such business is forecast to hit \$100 billion by 2000. What will the banks then actually be doing?

called The Silver Swan. Who, back in Merrie England, was plagiarising whom? One for Ye Serious Frande Office, methinks. Or perhaps not. SWANNING off to Merrie Lynch is Goldman Sachs's media analyst Neil Blackley, his exit marked by cries of "Lee Majors!" (the actor who played the Six Million Dollar Man). That's right: Mr Blackley is replacing Merrie's ex-media-ites, Richard Dale and David Forster, for six very large ones over two years.

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Golf

The silent posting of a figure 7 for one can have the same effect as the whoosh and thud of a guillotine blade in cutting off a career



Back to basics... David Williams gets into the swing of things in his garage. He finds himself back at school having missed 17 cuts out of 27

David Davies on the professional life and death that is today's European Qualifying School

Heads will roll in fight for green card

TO INNOCENT eyes it is only a leader-board, a device for indicating who has done what. There are several at every tournament and there is one at San Roque in Spain, the venue for today's PGA European Tour final Qualifying School for those who wish to play top-class professional golf next year.

played well enough to get their card. If they have, there is the possibility of riches. If they have not, there is not. It has a hideous fascination and those who gather round it would, in another age, have done so at the foot of the guillotine. The silent posting of a figure 7 as a score for one hole against a man's name can have the same effect as the whoosh and thud of the blade in the cutting off of a career.

travelling expenses, and now it was all for nothing. The leader-board is no respecter of reputations. Every year there are bewildered professionals who stand in front of it, unable to believe what it tells them: that the only career they had known was now closed to them. One year, 1992, it was David Williams, a pleasant and civilised man attached to the Woburn Golf and Country Club.

he was facing ruin. He went back to the school he had first attended when he turned professional, in 1979, a place he thought, and devoutly wished, he would never return. He failed. Now he had two options, one almost unthinkable. He could go to the sponsors he had met over the years and try to get invitations to play in their events or he could abandon the struggle and go and sell golf balls back at the club.

But Williams comes of champion stock. His mother, Patricia, competed in the 1962 Winter Olympics in Oslo, his father Freddie was World Speedway champion in 1950 and 1953, and there could be no question of David giving up. He went for the invites, he got them, he failed to make enough money to prevent hav-

ing to go back to the school in 1993, where he failed again. Digging deep, he went for more invites and this time made enough to keep his card. In 1994 and 1995 he played well enough, just to keep it, but in those two years he was 110th and 121st, making barely enough to cover expenses. This year he will be back at the school, having missed 17 cuts in 27 tournaments. He will see some familiar faces: Gary Nicklaus, son of Jack, and Paul Way, a former Ryder Cup player and winner of a PGA Championship. Mike McLean, Brian Marchbank, Ove Selberg, Gordon Brand Sr, tournament winners all, will be back at the birthplace of their careers, hoping against hope that the leader-board will show they have been reborn.

Racing Richards has four-star brandy option

EVERYTHING Gordon Richards touches seems to turn to gold and the trainer with the Midas touch has an 18 carat chance of lifting the Hennessy Gold Trophy for the second time in three years on Saturday week.

"I thought he did it very well," said Richards. "The Greenalls Gold Cup might be in the season and I'm sure he's the type that will handle Altrive well in due course." Could Be Better stayed on well and remains at 11-1 with Ladbrokes to complete the Hennessy double. The defeat did not deter Charlie Brooks, the gelding's trainer, who said: "I was pleased enough with that and he should run at Newbury. At least this means he hasn't picked up a penalty."

Unguided Missile was added to the Greystoke trainer's powerful team for the Newbury race after an impressive victory in the Edward Hamner Memorial Chase at Haydock yesterday. Ladbrokes offered Unguided Missile 4-1 with a run for the big handicap after he thrashed Could Be Better, last year's Hennessy victor, by four lengths, and now Richards has to decide who will be in the line-up. His other entries are The Grey Monk (2-1 favourite), Addington Boy (10-1) and Tartan Tyrant.

Richards, who won the brandy chase two years ago with One Man, said: "I thought it was well worth leaving all four horses in the Hennessy and at this stage I'm keeping my options open. The Grey Monk did it very well at Ayr last Saturday and I thought Addington Boy ran a smashing race at Cheltenham. Much will depend on the ground. It's a lovely position to be in and I might run more than one, but Addington Boy certainly wouldn't go if it was soft. I would have to say that The Grey Monk is the main one at the moment."

Pertemps recruit King George

PERTEMPS, the recruitment specialist, are to take over the sponsorship of the King George VI Chase at Kempton on Boxing Day.

known as the Pertemps Christmas Festival. Refurbishing the Kempton grandstand, and resiting the paddock immediately behind it, is part of a £2.4 million scheme that will also make parking and traffic routes much more user friendly.

Wincanton runners and riders with form guide

Table with 2 columns: Race number and details (e.g., 1.30 Ashby Hill, 2.00 Marlborough Mirror, 2.30 Le Malin). Includes race times and conditions.

Table with 2 columns: Race number and details (e.g., 3.00 THE BATTLE OF BRISTOL, 3.30 THE BATTLE OF BRISTOL, 4.00 THE BATTLE OF BRISTOL). Includes race times and conditions.

Sedgefield

Table with 2 columns: Race number and details (e.g., 1.30 Fly To The West, 1.40 Rye Crossing, 1.50 Rye Crossing). Includes race times and conditions.

Warwick

Table with 2 columns: Race number and details (e.g., 1.20 Flycatcher Lad, 1.50 Conwell Stables, 2.00 Recovery Pace). Includes race times and conditions.

Results

Table with 2 columns: Race name and results (e.g., HAYDOCK, 1.10 Chas. Halkett, 2.00 Marlborough Mirror, 2.30 Le Malin).

Table with 2 columns: Race name and results (e.g., 3.00 THE BATTLE OF BRISTOL, 3.30 THE BATTLE OF BRISTOL, 4.00 THE BATTLE OF BRISTOL).

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RACELINE logo and contact information for Wincanton, Warwick, and Sedgefield.

Blurred for the first time - SEDGEBELD: 12.40 Flyaway Birds; 1.40 Rye Crossing, Allchangeur; WINCANTON: 2.00 Stormhill Pilgrim; 4.00 Mr Jasper; WARWICK: 3.50 Evexio Ruft.

Sports Guardian

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Group C: Manchester Utd 0, Juventus 1

United fall for sucker punch

David Lacey

PASSIONATE Old Trafford and an inspired second half from Ryan Giggs could not save Manchester United from another home defeat last night. Juventus winning with a first-half penalty from Alessandro Del Piero.

Now United will have to beat Rapid Vienna in Austria in a fortnight's time to give themselves the best chance of reaching the quarter-finals.

If the visit of the Champions Cup holders could not produce some of the old-time favour at the ground then nothing ever would. Three weeks earlier, when Manchester United had seen their 40-year-old unbeaten European home record fall to Fennerhale, there had been a lack of passion both on and off the field.

Now was the moment for players and fans to put things right. In theory, a point might have been enough but this was no time to be thinking of percentages.

United's followers might wave the flags, however, but Juventus it was who set the standard at the start with a series of broad, sweeping attacks that had the United defenders tumbling back desperately to cover.

Any thoughts that Juventus might be keeping their powder dry for Tuesday's World Club Championship match

against River Plate in Tokyo were quickly dispelled. With Zidane, Deschamps, Jugovic and Di Livio powering past Butt and Keane in midfield, Boksic soon found opportunities to get behind defenders. For a while the English champions were trapped in their own third of the field. Something approaching panic set in as early as the third minute when Zidane's centre was half-cleared by Schmeichel and a miscue by Butt momentarily left Del Piero facing an empty net.

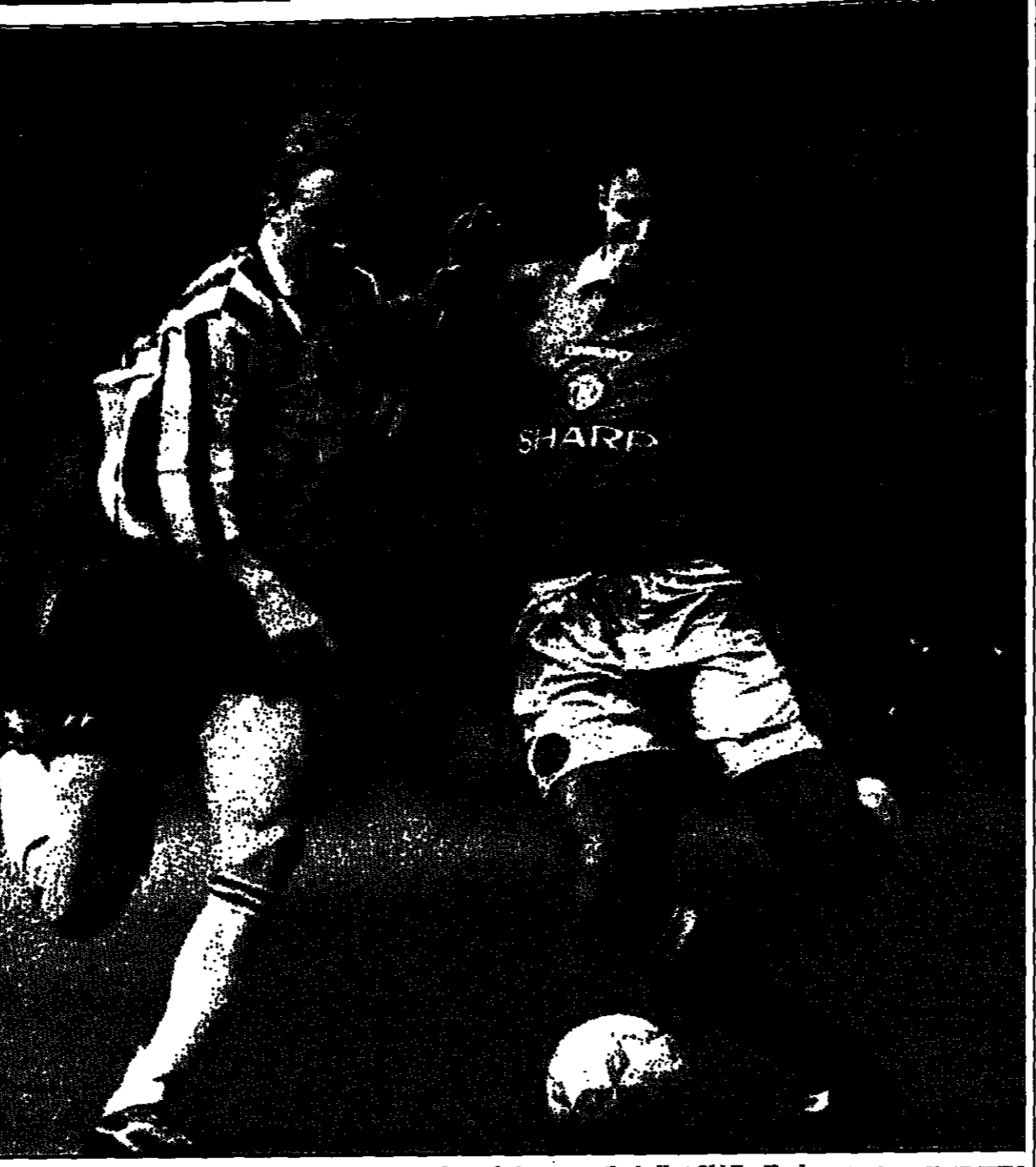
Del Piero was unable to exploit the situation and when May met Beckham's corner with a header that skimmed the Juventus bar, Old Trafford hoped the crisis had passed.

Some hope: in the next instant a lumping Phil Neville gave way to McClair, necessitating a reshuffle which saw Keane withdrawn to counter-attack and Johnsen taking Neville's place on the left.

The precious opportunities, when they turned up, needed to be taken. Certainly Cantona should have done better in the 18th minute when a free-kick from Beckham on the right was cleared straight to where the Frenchman was lurking to the left of goal. Cantona had a lot of net to aim at but dragged his shot wide of the far post.

Still, with Beckham now beginning to show signs of finding space behind Torricelli on the right and Giggs ready to take on opponents for speed,

hardly posed the problems for Juventus that Boksic and his cohorts were creating for United at the other end. The face of Cantona might adorn many a United flag, but Zidane was the principal Gal-



Ball-watching... Alen Boksic and Ronny Johnsen keep their eyes on the ball at Old Trafford. PHOTOGRAPH: MICHAEL STEEL

United had at least seen off the initial onslaught by the half-hour.

Yet the contrast in style and technique remained stark. Cantona, his influence peripheral, and Solskjaer

lic inspiration and 10 minutes before half-time he instigated the move which led to Juventus going in front. Deschamps, a fellow Frenchman, gathered his pass before finding Del Piero scuttling towards the right-hand corner of the penalty area.

But, suckered into making a tackle as the Italian crossed the 18-yard line, gave away a penalty which Del Piero thumped into the roof of the United net. By half-time only Schmeichel's agility in saving Boksic's shot on the turn had kept United in the contest.

The frustrating thing for United was that, outplayed though they undoubtedly had been, chances still fell their way and were still being missed, usually by Cantona.

Shortly before half-time, from Beckham's excellent cross, he headed over the bar. Shortly after, when Giggs's through ball left him with only Peruzzi to beat, Cantona

still could not outwit the Juventus goalkeeper.

Fortunately for United, Del Piero proved equally profligate when Ferrara's pass left him in a similarly inviting situation. With the ball bobbling, his shot sailed over the bar.

As Giggs exploited a slip by Di Livio before shooting only a fraction too high, United clung to the hope that a one-goal deficit will always offer.

The strength of the header Solskjaer put just wide after 63 minutes kept up Old Trafford's spirits, then with seven minutes to go Cantona almost grabbed the equaliser, but his dipping half volley from outside the area bounced frustratingly off the crossbar.

Out of the ring Christy can look as devilishly wistful as a soft-focus Doris Day or as sparkily and sex-appeal knowing as Meg Ryan. She is no smouldering glamour-puss

Sitting pretty but packing an ugly punch



Frank Keating

OUTCRY over in the ring," said the headline. "Outcry" will be the word, too, if they ever let Mrs Christy Martin loose on the boxing bills of Britain. She hits to hurt and seldom misses. For the sake and safety of the home-based sorority, women's lib should frame a few amendments, fast.

The headline on Tuesday followed the Amateur Boxing Association's decision to allow females aged 10 or over to fight in Britain as amateurs for the first time in the 116 years of the ABA's existence. But the ruling will unquestionably swell British membership of the presently scant list of professionals who fight with hitherto no number of amateurs.

With the old order and culture being so topsy-turveyed, I despair that by the turn of the century there will be more British women prizefighters than men. Mrs Martin will be coming after them. It will not be a pretty sight.

She is 27, from West Virginia. They call her "the coal-miner's daughter". Her left is like a pick, her right like a shovel. She is the latest luminary to light up the preposterous Don King's murky den. She is as bright as her sequined dressing-gown and, she says, enjoys working as a supply teacher in maths and English when she can get away from the gym. At the latter, when she was 21, she fell in love with her personal trainer Jim Martin. Now they are married and he is her manager. At first, he says, he was against her boxing — "and then I saw her fight and all I saw was dollar-signs," he adds moonily and unabashed.

His wife has not lost a fight in six years. She drives a \$70,000 (€43,000) BMW, and so does he. King agrees it helps the ticket-selling that "my Christine is pristine" — meaning white-skinned. The only files on Don are at the front of his trousers.

Out of the ring Christy can look as devilishly wistful as a soft-focus Doris Day or as sparkily and sex-appeal knowing as Meg Ryan. She is no smouldering glamour-puss

but, at work, she is one who, with a relishing snarl, scratches to draw blood by the bucketful. Last week in Las Vegas she earned \$36,000 when a gruesome "split" of a first-round right-hander splayed the senses and legs of a bewildered black Bambl called Bethaney from Atlanta. Sky has already shown Mrs Martin's venom a few times on British screens. Like the US weather, we will get it over here for real soon enough. She will bring with her a nice paradoxical counter-drum for British feminists to wobble their jowls and chests over. Which is less PC? An all-female smilingly sanitised Mrs World competition? Or a male-aping and sadistically bloodletting Mrs World heavyweight boxing champion? The latter is repulsive and surely worth burning a drawful of bras for. But what about equality of opportunity between the sexes? Difficult one, eh, gals?

The monstrous regiment's best bet is attack through King's absurdly blatant sexism. He introduces you to his distaff dish. She flutters her eyelids. You shake hands with the right that could bust your jaw. Doing the honours, Don says in his usual hot-gospel EYE-TAL-ICS: "Meet my champ, the most vivacious, curvaceous, voluptuous and intoxicatingly beautiful little thing who enjoys and excels in causing pain and hurt like she's not a care in the world and has just run down to the candy-store to buy a cinnamon roll. When she hits, they never get up, so I want you, sir, to call on your friends like Max Factor and Mr Revlon and tell them this Christy of mine will get into the ring to promote round the world their 'non-smear lipstick' or 'rouge that don't bruise'. Tell 'em she's The Girl That Can Pack a Punch Yet Still Look BEE-UTE-IF-FULL."

"No-nice to meet you, Mrs Martin, ma'am," I muttered as I began to back away. "Good luck tomorrow," I said. "No worries," she said, smiling with a sweet serenity. "I'll bang her once, she'll be scrambled, it won't last a round."

AND, when she coquettishly squigged up her nose to emphasise the terrible threat, I suddenly thought of that immortal and Churchillian retort by beloved Henry Cooper when, in an anti-boxing TV debate, the battle-axe Baroness Summerskill said: "Mr Cooper, get a mirror and just look at the state of your nose." And 'Erny replied: "Get one yourself, madam, and look at your nose. Boxing's my excuse. What's yours?"



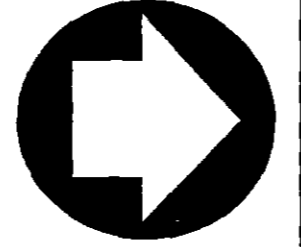
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Weird sex, sad sex, joke sex — anything, in current literary novels, rather than old-fashioned rumpy-pumpy, evoked in tumescent prose engorged with pseudo-poetic imagery. John Dugdale

Books G2 page 8

Guardian Crossword No 20,816

Set by Rufus

- Across**
- 7 Needle for decoration on artificial silk (7)
 - 8 It doesn't make sense, but put it in anyway (7)
 - 10 Recent change of heart (6)
 - 11 Said to be celebrated (8)
 - 12 State welcome to King (4)
 - 13 Fight opportunity for murder? Nothing doing (4,2,4)
 - 14 A charge made upon income? (8,3)
 - 15 Pull leg about being in bed that's untidy (10)
 - 22 Left or right in the vessel (4)
 - 23 Forces in conflict, though connected with the law (8)
 - 24 Instant support (6)
 - 25 The Magi spent upset in victory (4,3)
 - 26 Bad rule may become permanent (7)
- Down**
- 1 Former pupil has to wait and see (7)
 - 2 It presses for accommodation over the club (4-4)
 - 3 It's way up as money (6)
 - 4 Liqueur made in Eastern state (8)
 - 5 Hooded jacket Rex found in a tree (6)
 - 6 Sharp reminder of the church's status (7)
 - 9 There's nothing special about Clapham, say (11)
 - 15 Unusual regret about one's record (6)
 - 16 Particular pieces muddled by a learner (8)
 - 17 Arab that is bound to be a wanderer (7)
 - 18 Hint reveals both experience and age (7)

CROSSWORD SOLUTION 20,816

20 Staggered, but got in line (6)
21 America is after a record in Olympic event (6)

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